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TWELVE SPORT IMMORTALS

EDITED BY
ERNEST V. HEYN

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1949

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FOREWORD

FOLLOWING the tradition of the great profile-writers, Alva Johnston, Margaret Case Harriman, Jack Alexander, and a very few others, the handful of sport writers with the rare ability to mix fact, anecdotes, and interpretation of character have dug deep for their material. As one of the best of them, Ed Fitzgerald, put it in a brief speech he once made on the subject: "You begin at the library, surrounded by all the books or articles ever written about your subject. You make countless notes. You list all the people who can give you unpublished facts, anecdotes, and sidelights. You see as many of these people as you can. You wear them out with questions. If possible, you spend hours, perhaps days with the victim himself. Ninety per cent of the work poured into a story is in the preparation, the planning. The basic interpretation is the essential skeleton. The countless facts, anecdotes, quotations are the body that makes your portrait a living thing, you hope."

The profiles contained in this book were first published in the pages of *SPORT Magazine*, under the title of "Sport Specials." Ever since the first Special—which incidentally was the superb interpretation of Joe Louis you will find in this collection—the editors of *SPORT* have assigned and published one such full-length portrait each month.

Oddly enough, it is not always the well-known sport writer who has time, talent, or inclination for this kind of "sport specialization." That is why there are only three bylines represented in this volume—Jack Sher, Tom Meany and the aforementioned Ed Fitzgerald. Jack and Ed are discoveries of ours, at least in the direction of sports personality pieces. The knack of Digging Deep has also been demonstrated in *Sport Specials*, unfortunately not represented in this volume, by Al Stump, Frank Graham, Gordon Cobbledick, and Milton Gross.

As Editor-in-Chief of *SPORT Magazine*, the privilege of selecting the "Sport Specials" represented in this book was vested in my hands. My credit line as its editor is scarcely deserved. The selection of the dozen immortals was little more than a process of checking off names. In the planning of specials for *SPORT Magazine*, I am always indebted to assistant editor John Winkin, sportswise to the Nth degree. For the adaptation of the magazine text for book purposes, and the writing of additional material to bring the articles up to date, herewith a deep bow

to associate editor Jack Newcombe and managing editor Al Perkins. Art Director Griffith Foxley designed and planned the illustrated insert, and the reproductions of his paintings of several immortals adorn that section. Bill Koelsch and Irving Brandt were responsible for the factual accuracy of the material.

Most important acknowledgment of all is to O. J. Elder, the man whose enthusiasm and interest in sports is so great that he dreamed up *SPORT* as a magazine dedicated to the interests of the sport spectator. Without his foresight this collection would never have been written.

—ERNEST V. HEYN

LOU GEHRIG

The Man and the Legend

By Jack Sher

ALONG with the folk legends that are native to America—tall tales of the bravery of Davey Crockett and the strength of Paul Bunyan—there is also one about a seemingly indestructible baseball player who was called “The Iron Horse.” His name was Henry Louis Gehrig.

During the brief lull between innings, as the teams change sides, you often hear his name. It is always linked with the name of a player Lou followed in the batting order and in life.

“Yeah, it was in ’28, see? I seen the Babe walk up and paste one right out there in them same right-field bleachers. And then Gehrig comes up and he dumps another one right under the scoreboard there in center. Geez, it was too bad about Lou. He was a strong guy.”

He was strong, all right. He was a giant of a man in the American tradition of big fellows with unbelievable strength. But the fans remember him most poignantly as a weak and broken man, his body wasting away, standing in Yankee Stadium, a white handkerchief held to his face, crying softly. It was July 4th, 1939, and the words Gehrig had just spoken into a microphone had created the most heart-breaking moment in sport. He had said, “I may have been given a bad break, but I got an awful lot to live for.” Pause. “I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth.”

Lucky? Well, Lou Gehrig was never a lucky man. But, at that moment, he must have been a supremely happy one. For from then on, until the wretched, creeping disease snuffed him out, Lou had the one elusive thing he had always wanted most—the wholehearted love of baseball fans and people everywhere in the world. All of his life, until then, he had felt he was just another ballplayer whose machinelike clouts traveled high and far, but who could never reach the hearts of those who saw them hit.

It may seem strange and unnatural not to look on the end of Lou's career as tragic. But if he had played out the string and retired quietly,

he would have missed the one thing he had tried so valiantly to get during his playing days—the feeling that he was loved and appreciated and would be remembered. He got that. He had to get it the hard way, the way he got everything, but it would have been more tragic if he had missed it.

"You have to get knocked down to realize how people really feel about you," Gehrig said to me in an interview late in 1940, shortly before he died. "I've realized that more than ever lately. The other day, I was on my way to the car. It was hailing, the streets were slippery and I was having a tough time of it. I came to a corner and started to slip. But before I could fall, four people jumped out of nowhere to help me. When I thanked them, they all said they knew about my illness and had been keeping an eye on me."

All through his playing days, Gehrig never seemed to kindle much enthusiasm or regard in the fans. He was undoubtedly the most valuable ballplayer any club ever had. But he was marked off as a dull, colorless performer and dwarfed in the shadow of more dramatic stars. He was laughed at as "Old Biscuit Pants" and "Piano Legs." While Ruth was slamming those prodigious homers, Lou's great hitting was called "monotonous!" After the Babe bowed out, the graceful, easy style of Joe DiMaggio captured the imagination of spectators and Gehrig became merely a "fixture" in the line-up.

Gehrig believed this myth that had him fenced in and trapped. If ever a man doubted his greatness and the power and drive of his play, it was Lou Gehrig. He had a sort of stubborn pride in being a work horse.

It can be said almost without argument that only those who actually played with or against Larrapin' Lou really appreciated how great a player he was, and how important he was to the Yankees. He was characterized by fans and sportswriters as a quiet plugger. But his former teammates will tell you that Gehrig's constant stream of peppy chatter on the playing field kept alive the famed Yankee spirit during the days when they were so invincible.

Bucky Harris, onetime manager of the Yanks, who played against Lou year after year, rated him on a par with Ruth as a terror at the plate. "Listen," Bucky told me recently, "when that guy came to bat, all you could do was hold your breath. When you consider everything, the number of games he played, the way he hit, his reliability, and his drive, he was, for me, the greatest first baseman of all time!"

There were several sportswriters listening in on this conversation. One of them grinned and said, "Billy Terry ain't gonna like you when he reads that, Bucky."

"I'll still take Gehrig," Harris said, his face serious. "Everyone keeps picking Sisler and Chance and Terry, but maybe they ought to take a look at Lou's record. He didn't seem very fancy around first base," Bucky

went on, "but he happened to field 1.000 in all but one World Series. In seven World Series, his average was .997—and who ever did better than that? Young fella," he turned to me, "don't write a line about Gehrig until you study his record."

Ruth hit 15 Series home runs to Gehrig's 10, but Lou did better with his World Series batting average, hitting .361 to the Sultan's .325. Lou holds the record for batting in the most World Series runs, a total of 35. He made the most homers in three consecutive games, four in 1928. He tied with Ruth for the most runs scored in one Series, nine in 1932. He batted in the most runs by any player in one Series, nine in 1928. That same year he whacked the most four baggers in a four-game series, four. These are not just Gehrig's records. They are World Series records that have never been equalled.

The tragedy of Gehrig's tremendous records and stunning career was not only that he lacked the flashy showiness so popular during the era in which he played, but that he always seemed to rise to his greatest heights at the precise time when it would be least noticed. And no matter what he did, that wonderful, flamboyant, cussed but naturally beloved Babe Ruth seemed to have been born to outshine him and dim the glory that should have been Gehrig's.

No more bitter epitaph to Lou Gehrig's powerful slugging has been penned than the one written by columnist Franklin P. Adams: "He was the guy who hit all those home runs the year Ruth broke the record."

Bitter and true. Lou's lifetime batting average was .340. Babe Ruth's was .342. That's the way it always went. Gehrig's greatest World Series play was against the Cards in 1928, when he set three all-time records. He had the unbelievable batting average in that Series of .545. The fantastic Babe went absolutely superhuman in that same Series and got 10 hits in 16 times at bat for a .625 average!

Every school kid knows the story of how the King of Swat slaughtered the Cubs in the World Series of 1932 and pulled off the famous "called home run." It was one of the most dazzling exhibitions in baseball. It was his second homer of the game. But another player, Lou Gehrig, also got two home runs that day, and the final score was 7 to 5 for the Yankees.

Only a few know that Lou Gehrig also called his shot that afternoon. He didn't do it in the dramatic way the Babe did. Not a fan in the stands, jittering with hysteria at Ruth's feat, knew anything about it. As Ruth jogged home, Lou was waiting for him at the plate, a smile on his face. Babe gripped his hand briefly and said, "You do the same thing I just done, kid."

"I will," Gehrig said, simply.

And he did. He hit the first pitch that came to him into the right-field bleachers. It was just another home run. The Babe had already seen to

it that every fan in the ball park belonged to him alone. It would have been inhuman of Lou not to envy this magnificent, theatrical quality of the Babe's. But he covered it up as he almost always did, with the shy, twisted grin that became his trademark.

By the Yankees, Gehrig was always referred to affectionately as "Buster." The nickname suggests a big, awkward kid who can bust 'em. Lou did not cut a very romantic or dashing figure in the field or at the plate. When he took his cuts, he stood up there almost motionless, waving his bat a little, planted like a rock on his oversized legs. His unusually wide shoulders were always hunched slightly forward. When he took his lashing swing at the ball, there was little grace in the movement. In later years, he learned to pull his hits and loft the ball. But at his peak, he was a line-drive hitter whose homers were punched into the stands or over the fence like a lightning right cross in the prize ring.

His amazing endurance record, for which Lou Gehrig will be most remembered, was hung up at frightful cost in pain and punishment. He played with fractured hands, doubled over with lumbago, woozy from being hit in the head by wild pitches. He stayed in games grinning crazily, like a macabre dancer in a grueling marathon. He performed in every Yankee game for 14 years. He played in 2,130 consecutive games, not counting World Series contests, and there isn't a ballplayer alive who won't tell you that this record will stand forever.

Even the hard-headed, unsentimental Ed Barrow, who was then General Manager of the Yanks, was deeply affected by Gehrig's passion to keep his record intact. One morning, as Lou's consecutive-game run was approaching the 2,000 mark, Gehrig was so sick he couldn't get out of bed. As game time approached, a cloud appeared in the sky. Barrow cancelled the game. Not one drop of rain fell that afternoon.

"Say Ed," a reporter asked Barrow the next day, "you really didn't think it was going to rain, did you?"

"Damn it, of course I did!" Barrow snapped. And then he added, "Gehrig will be able to play today."

In the 1936 World Series against the Giants, Gehrig came as close to becoming a headline hero as he had ever been. Ruth's career had ended. That year Lou copped the home-run title, smashing out 49 round trippers. He was voted the most valuable player in the American League for the fourth time. As the Series opened, the spotlight began to focus on him. The Yankees jumped off to a 2-1 lead in the Series, but in the fourth game they faced the Giants' speedy ace, the great Carl Hubbell.

It was anybody's ball game until the third inning. With a man on base, Lou came to the plate, took that characteristic hitch at the top of his swing, and blasted one of Hubbell's fast balls into the center-field stands. The crowd really went berserk that day, cheering the way they had for the Bam. The Giants never recovered from that blow. The

Yanks won the game 5-2 and went ahead 3 to 1 in the Series. For 24 hours, Lou Gehrig was elevated to almost Ruthian heights of acclaim.

But it didn't last long. The next day, in the most crucial moment of the game, Gehrig slow-wittedly fluffed a beautiful chance to score. He had singled, then gone to third when Mel Ott muffed the ball in the outfield. Bill Dickey hit a screaming ground ball to the infield. The play was at first, Gehrig started for home, then stopped. He stood there, undecided, then started for home again. Dickey was thrown out, the ball was whipped to the plate, and Lou was tagged out. The Giants won the game 5-4 and the fans went away mumbling about "Bonehead Lou." Yesterday's heroic homer was forgotten.

The Yanks won the Series, but Gehrig, who had turned the tide for them in the fourth game, was just another player on a winning team.

One of the most shocking revelations I ran into as I quizzed players and managers and scouts and authorities about the life and times of Gehrig, was that not one of them mentioned the greatest day Lou ever had on a ball field. The day was June 3, 1932, in Shibe Park against the Philadelphia Athletics. What he did on that long afternoon, no other modern clouter had ever equalled, not even Babe Ruth, who said after the game, "Kid, that was the greatest I ever seen."

Those in the stands that day saw Lou Gehrig hit *four home runs in four consecutive times at bat*. He hit two of them into the center-field stands, and two over the right-field fence. In the ninth inning, Lou sent another one screaming toward the fence. Al Simmons, the Philly outfielder, made an incredible leap into the air and speared it with one hand. Gehrig was rounding third, for what would have been an all-time, unbeatable record of five homers in one game. But only Robert Lowe of the Boston Nationals, back in the ancient baseball year of 1894, had ever hit four homers in four consecutive times at bat in one nine-inning game.

"Well, Lou," the usually taciturn manager Joe McCarthy said, patting the number 4 on Gehrig's back. "Nobody can take today away from you."

But somebody did. That afternoon was the one in which the immortal manager, John McGraw, chose to announce his retirement from baseball. This was the news that made the newspaper headlines across the country, blanketing the marvel of Gehrig's home-run festival. But the incredible feat should be remembered, because even the Babe would have told you that the most homers he ever hit in one game was three, and not consecutively. And when he did that, the headlines were bold and black for Ruth.

There has always been a great deal of mystery over how Gehrig felt about Ruth and vice versa. There are those who will tell you that the two were close pals. Others say that bad feeling existed between them.

Neither statement is fact. When Gehrig first came up, the rawest of rookies, he idolized the Babe. The King was friendly toward him. He gave him tips on batting and how to conduct his life. At times there was some slight rivalry between them, but it was never serious.

The truth is that Gehrig never considered himself the equal of the Babe—and neither did Ruth. Babe knew there was only one Babe. He was often generous to Lou and lavish in his praise, but they were never, as many have suggested, close friends. Ruth gave Gehrig plenty of advice, but he would always give anyone a large chunk of whatever happened to be on his mind.

When they toured the country on exhibitions together in 1929, Gehrig spoke of his travels with Ruth as, "the most wonderful education I've ever been given. I don't mean in books. I mean in getting the most out of life, in learning how to meet people and having a good time and really seeing all there is to see. Babe sure knows how to live," he added wistfully.

It was on this trip, during which they covered 8,000 miles in 21 days, that the sportswriters began referring to Gehrig in relation to Ruth as the "Crown Prince." Actually, Lou behaved more like a trusted servant, or a bodyguard to the King. One night at a dinner in a Midwestern city, the Babe, feeling in an expansive mood, chose to deliver one of his lectures to Lou before a crowd of admirers.

"You've got 10 years ahead of you in the big leagues, Lou," the Babe said, puffing a cigar. "Save your dough. Start one of those trust funds. Every dollar you save will be one more laugh when your home-run days are over."

Ruth, unwittingly prophetic, called the shot on the number of years Gehrig had left to play. A few months over 10 years from that day, Gehrig's life as a home-run hitter was finished. The dollars he saved did not provide him with many laughs. He *did* save, although his salary never approached what Ruth collected each year. The highest Lou ever received was \$37,000 in 1937, not even half of the Bam's fabulous \$80,000 top. Gehrig's lifetime earnings from the Yanks totalled \$316,000. Considering that he was in there every day, giving all he had, he was hardly overpaid.

One Summer, to augment his salary, Lou became an insurance salesman. The first customer he went after was the Babe himself. Lou spent days chasing Ruth around a golf course, trying to convince him that he should take out a policy. Finally, in exasperation, Ruth threw down his clubs and signed up for a huge amount. "Thanks, Babe," Gehrig said earnestly. "You'll never regret this."

Unlike Ruth, the steady, sincere, and sentimental Gehrig needed roots. He was always uncomfortable in strange surroundings. His love for his mother, that large, stolid, self-sacrificing woman, was overwhelm-

ing. For years, his sole purpose in life, other than playing baseball, seemed to be devotion to her. In 1928, using his profits from two World Series, he bought his parents a small but lovely house in New Rochelle, New York.

Some of the reporters and ballplayers used to try to get him dates. They'd rib him about his shy and even terrified attitude toward females his own age. He would blush, this six-foot, one-inch, 205-pound giant. Rubbing a bony wrist with a huge paw, he'd remark, "Aw, guys, you oughta know my mother makes a home comfortable enough for me. I don't need much else."

Lou loved the movies. He was absolutely gone on them, because in the safety of a darkened theater he could experience secondhand all the romantic yearnings he felt without the danger of seeming awkward or gauche, or getting hurt for expressing himself. He was not a stupid man. In fact, he was probably one of the most widely read of any of his contemporary players. He was an avid opera fan. He liked poetry. He also liked comic strips, kids, and animals. It was grown-up people, light conversation, sophistication, and gayety that frightened him. By nature, he was a serious man. That grin he constantly wore was like a shield.

He was extremely moved whenever the fans displayed the slightest affection for him, or let loose with a cheer for his efforts. He never caught on to the knack of letting his admirers know it, but he wanted them to know. He was only able to do it after he was struck down.

"After I announced that I was through," he told me in his last interview, "I was able to tell the fans how I had felt about them and the way they treated me through the years. Their letters came pouring in. There were about 30,000 of them. Can you imagine that? It took my wife and me eight months to answer them."

If Gehrig made any enemies during his life, nobody has ever been able to uncover them. Although he spent two years at Columbia University, when he came up to the major leagues he was as raw and countrified-looking a rookie as you could find anywhere. He carried a cheap paper suitcase, stumbled all over himself, and cheerfully took the unmerciful and unceasing wisecracking and riding of rival players and teammates.

The only man who ever aroused him to serious and deadly anger was the ferocious and spiteful Ty Cobb. Although Cobb hated almost every rival, he seemed to have a special distaste for Gehrig. Whenever Detroit tangled with the Yankees, Tyrus would bedevil Lou with the most vituperative language at his command.

"You're a bum!" Cobb would screech. "You're a thick-headed, no-good Dutchman. Get out of there, you lousy Kraut!"

Gehrig stood it for months. Then, one day, as he passed the Tiger dugout, Cobb let fly with a barrage of unusually distasteful epithets.

Lou lowered his head, clenched his fists, and charged down into the opening to annihilate Ty. He traveled like a locomotive toward Cobb, who nimbly stepped out of the way. Gehrig's skull cracked into an iron stanchion and he fell to the ground, stunned. He got up a few seconds later and went after Ty again like a punch-drunk fighter, but the players managed to hold them apart. The next day, Cobb was willing to call off his feud and the inherently decent Gehrig shook hands with him.

Possessed of terrifying strength, the massive Gehrig could have used it to scare half the players in the American League out of their wits. But there wasn't an ounce of bully in him. The diminutive Bucky Harris, half apologetically, told how, when he was with Washington, he once caused Lou to boot a ball game by stepping on his toe.

"We were playing a three-game series with the Yanks," Bucky related, "and Gehrig was crucifying us. He was pasting everything our pitchers threw. Clark Griffith came to me the night before the third game and asked me if I knew of any way to stop Gehrig. I said I thought I did. The next day, with the score tied 2-2 in the eighth inning and a man on third, I bunted down the first base line. Lou fielded it and ran for the bag. I came down hard on his toe. I've never seen a man look so surprised and hurt. When the man on third broke for home, Gehrig threw the ball way over the catcher's head and we won the game."

Gehrig took a terrific riding from the sportswriters for booting the game, but he never said a word about what Bucky had done to him. All that season, Harris waited for Lou to get even with him—to give him the hip or spike him. "He never did," Bucky said. "Every time I came down to first, he just looked at me as though to ask me how could I do such a thing to him. I got to feeling so ashamed of myself that I finally apologized to him. You should have seen him light up!"

Without his brute strength and his fanatical determination to learn how to control his muscles, Lou Gehrig would probably never even have been able to hang on to a position in the minor leagues. He had none of the born baseball instincts of a Cobb, Speaker, Ruth, or DiMaggio. Little Miller Huggins, his first manager, almost went out of his mind trying to drill baseball savvy into Gehrig. "Only this kid's willingness and lack of conceit will make him a ballplayer," Huggins once said despairingly. "That and those muscles are all he has."

It proved to be enough, more than enough, but Huggins never lived to see all the sparkling records Gehrig marked up. Lou holds the record for making the most homers with the bases loaded, 23. He led the league four times in runs scored, two times in home runs. He shares with Jimmy Foxx the record for the most consecutive years batting in 100 runs or more, 13. And for 13 consecutive years he scored more than 100 runs, which is also a record. There are many other permanent marks he has left, some 25 in all. But the thing that tickled Huggins most of all

was the way Lou improved his fielding. Old Hug fully appreciated how hard Lou toiled to beat the stigma of "Tanglefoot Lou," a name the sportswriters hung on him early in his career.

Most ballplayers like to forget the ineptitude and lack of finesse of their early years in baseball. Gehrig could never forget it. He reminded you of it, every time you talked to him. He didn't do it to show how much he had done for himself, but how much others had done for him. Almost until the day he died, he was spilling out his gratitude to Ruth, coach Charlie O'Leary, and Huggins.

It must have been extremely painful for Gehrig to see the free-and-easy, natural ballplayers skyrocket into fame year after year as he plugged along, improving slowly. He was more aware than any of them that he had none of the God-given magic that enabled a performer instinctively, in a split-second, to do the right thing at the right time. Even after he mastered all fundamentals and had baseball down cold, an unusually critical moment often made him look like a terrible bonehead.

It was always something of a miracle to Gehrig that he became a major-league player, a star of the famed Murderer's Row. And, when you know the complete story of his life, perhaps it *was* something of a miracle—and a touching and inspiring one, at that.

Lou Gehrig's early childhood wasn't guided by any star of destiny. He was one of the common herd, a fat boy from the congested upper regions of Manhattan, one whose inheritance was drabness and poverty, whose young eyes knew only littered streets, grimy rooms with paint chipping off the walls and worn-out carpets on the floor. His only luck in those days was that he was healthy enough to stay alive. The brother and sister who preceded him had been sickly; they died in infancy.

Henry Louis, the Gehrig who was to become the pride of the Yankees, who was to be immortalized on film, and rise to the ranks of the heroes, was the son of German immigrants. His mother was a domestic worker, his father a handyman, tinsmith, butcher, and itinerant mechanic. Their son was born June 19, 1903, on a hot night in the Yorkville section on the upper East Side. From then on, the family moved all over uptown Manhattan, always living in the poorest sections. But Lou's mother scrubbed and slaved and somehow managed to stuff food down her son. Louis was going to be strong. Louis was not going to be taken away from her, weak and lifeless, the way her other children had been.

Heinrich Gehrig was never a steady provider. He tried his best, but it was Lou's mother who was the backbone of the family. It was from her that Lou got, not only his physical strength, but the moral courage that held him together through the hardship of his early life, his playing days, and up to the very end. Gehrig's worship of his mother went beyond the bounds of reason. In some ways, it was even harmful, because

for many years of his life he seemed to be living only for her. She was, until he married, the only person with whom he could be completely at ease.

Lou began his endurance record early in life. His grade-school teachers remember him as a chubby-faced, fat-bodied boy who plugged doggedly away at his school work, and refused to stay home even when he was sick. His grades were fairly high, earned by steady attendance and hard work. One fear clung to him all of his days—the fear that if he ever once took his nose off the grindstone, he would fall by the wayside.

As a kid, Gehrig's life outside of school was not very different from that of most street urchins. He played ball on vacant lots, swam in the filth of the East River, teased cops, made tar balls on roofs, idolized baseball heroes, and worked. At eight and nine, his round chunky legs pounded the streets on errands for merchants. He did odd jobs and dutifully brought home his pennies and nickels to his mother. He never got into trouble. He was average in every sense of the word, almost pitifully so.

When Lou was in seventh grade, his mother took a job as a cook at the Sigma Nu fraternity house on the Columbia campus. Heinrich, her husband, tended the furnace and did odd jobs. Lou hung around the backyard in his spare time, tossing a baseball back and forth with the amused fraternity brothers who called him "Little Heinie."

Sometimes, sitting on a chair in the kitchen, watching his mother at work over the stove, he would listen to the soft voice coming from the sturdy, work-bent body. "You'll go to college like these boys, Louis. You'll see," she said, in her precise, immigrant's English. "We will manage it. Your father will get a better job and you will go."

The Gehrigs left the Sigma Nu job and moved downtown to the outskirts of Greenwich Village, into a cheap flat. Christina got a job doing housework in New Jersey, and Heinrich found temporary work as a tinsmith. Lou entered the High School of Commerce, his mind set on becoming an accountant. This was not too lofty a goal. He had a fair head for figures and, he reasoned, he could never hope to be anything more than an average citizen.

He was a fat, round boy with curly, black hair and soft, sensitive blue eyes, like his mother's. He was something of a ridiculous figure that first year in high school. The girls laughed at his knee pants, which exaggerated the size of his body. He said nothing about this to anyone. It was that way later in life, too, whenever anyone ribbed him, or cut him down with a wisecrack. He never learned how to strike back. Instead, he went out for baseball and made the team.

Lou got his first pair of long pants by working for them in his spare time. At 15, when he was in his junior year in high school, he had his first taste of fame. It was overpowering. It worked on him like a drug.

It gave him an ambition to be great that he never relinquished. It happened at Wrigley Field in Chicago. The High School of Commerce team had won the New York City championship and was sent to Chicago for an inter-city game with the Windy City's Lane Tech.

Coach Harry Kane sent "Henry," as he called him, to the plate in the seventh inning with instructions to "Hit one out of the park."

It was a fantastic request. Nobody, not Kane or anyone in the stands, imagined that a high-school kid could hit one out of bounds in a major-league ball park. The youngster weighed 230 pounds then, but there were layers of fat over the muscles. He looked ludicrous and bulging in the tight-fitting uniform.

The 15-year-old Gehrig, legs wide apart, caught a pitch squarely. To the amazement of those in the ball park, it sailed on and on and out of sight beyond the fence. This had never been done by a high-school boy before and it created quite a stir in the press. HIGH SCHOOL BOY ANOTHER RUTH? the headlines asked. Lou came back to Commerce High something of a hero. There was nothing "average" about that clout. The kids in school began to look at him with new respect in their eyes.

Gehrig historians, swayed by this extraordinary feat, often make the error of referring to Lou as a sensational high-school athlete. He wasn't. With the exception of that one mighty clout, his hitting was under .200 and he was a very clumsy specimen around first base. It was his football playing, strangely enough, that earned him a chance to go to Columbia University where his baseball ability first attracted big-league scouts.

The athletic director of Columbia, a Sigma Nu man, was scouting the high schools looking for football talent for Columbia. He was quite impressed with the way a big, beefy fullback named Gehrig bulled through the line for Commerce High. As he stood on the sidelines, a small man with a graying mustache touched his sleeve.

"Pardon me," the man said, "but I am Heinrich Gehrig. The boy out there playing is my son."

The college man looked at the old fellow in bewilderment.

"Don't you remember," Gehrig's father went on. "I used to tend furnace. That's little Heinie. Don't you remember?"

A light dawned in the athletic director's eyes. "That kid—the little fat boy—" he pointed at the playing field in amazement. "That's him?"

After the game, the Sigma Nu man approached Gehrig as he came out of the showers. Lou remembered him. Unlike Ruth, he remembered almost everyone he ever met. They talked over old times, the days when Lou hung around the fraternity house and the athletic director was a college boy. It ended with the college man going home with Lou. Together, they told Christina that her son would be able to go to Columbia with the help of the athletic department and spare-time jobs. Her reaction to the news was to break down and cry.

When Gehrig left Columbia in his junior year to play professional baseball, Christina cried again. She never talked about his baseball. She would always remind the reporters who came to the house in Morningside Heights, and later on in New Rochelle, "My son went to Columbia University. He was a college man. He was very good in his studies and I did not want him to leave the university." She never really understood baseball. She had scrubbed and cooked in a fraternity house. She knew what a college was and what it meant.

At Columbia, Gehrig did not cut a classy figure on the campus. He was a guy in an old gray sweatshirt and unpressed pants, a hard-working student, the way he had been in grade and high school. He took up engineering and, if he had not been obligated to turn out for athletics, he probably would have spent his time trying for an engineering degree.

As a tackle on the Columbia Lions, Gehrig was again average. He took a lot of punishment, but was far from being a brilliant diagnoser of plays. "They stomped all over Lou," one of his teammates said, "but they could never crush his grin or spirit. And anyone who ran into him head on never felt quite the same afterward."

On the baseball diamond, Lou at first caused Andy Coakey as many headaches as he later inflicted on Miller Huggins. They tried him everywhere—in the outfield, at first base, as a pitcher. He was clumsy, unpredictable, and slow at fielding. His throws were as apt to wind up in the stands as they were in the hands of a receiver. But he hit! The way he slugged the ball—knocking windows out of buildings over 400 feet from home plate—reached the ears of big-league talent seekers.

"The first time I saw Lou Gehrig play was against Rutgers," scout Paul Krichell said. "He was playing the outfield. He didn't know what he was doing out there, but the moment I saw him hit one, I knew he would eventually be a great ballplayer. I've been with the Yankees 28 years," Krich grinned, "and I'd like to find just one more like him. I'd say Lou was one of the top four or five great players of all time."

Krichell also saw Gehrig perform as a pitcher for the Lions. He believes that Gehrig, like Ruth, had tremendous possibilities as a hurler. The big southpaw threw the ball with such blinding speed that Columbia batters, in practice games, refused to take their licks at the plate. The refusal was reasonable. Gehrig was dangerously wild. Those he didn't strike out, he walked. "He would have learned control," Krichell commented. "He was the sort of boy who could learn anything, given enough time and patience. It would have been a shame to make a pitcher out of him, though, with all that hitting power he had."

It has been written that Gehrig signed with the Yanks because he was dreamy-eyed about them, because he hero-worshipped them. Actually, he took the Yankee contract because his father needed to go to the hospital immediately and Colonel Ruppert offered a \$1500 cash

bonus if he would sign. His salary that first year was \$3000. Only a few hundred dollars of it was spent on himself.

Gehrig played 13 games with the Yankees before he was sent to Hartford, then an independent team which had player agreements with major-league clubs. In 1924, he played 10 games with the Yanks and was sent down again. His first time at bat in New York uniform, as a pinch hitter, Hollingsworth of the Senators struck him out on three pitched balls. The second time at bat, again as a pinch hitter against St. Louis, he got a double.

Lou played his first full major-league game against Washington in 1923, over the protest of Bullet Joe Bush. The veteran Yankee pitcher had his heart set on winning 20 games that year.

"Don't put that dumb rookie in, Hug," he begged the Yankee manager. "He'll gum up the ball game."

Gehrig began by living up to the Yankee hurler's prophecy. In an early inning, with a Senator on first and third, crafty Joe Judge dropped a perfect bunt down the first-base line. Lou ran in and scooped it up, then stood there holding the ball, dazed. The runner scored from third and the Washington club went ahead.

Bush was apoplectic. He walked over and grabbed the ball from Gehrig. "Whatsa matter with ya?" he yelled. "Ya dumb college punk! Where's your brains, stupid?"

The big first baseman blinked and stumbled back to first base. He suffered silently until the seventh inning. Two Yankees got on base. Then the Washington pitcher walked Ruth to get at the rookie Gehrig. The score was 5-2, the bases loaded. Bush looked wildly at Huggins as Gehrig hesitantly reached for a bat.

"Hey, Hug," Bush said. "You ain't gonna let that kid hit in this spot? I want to win this one!"

Huggins looked at the nervous Gehrig. "Go on out there and hit the ball," the Yankee manager snapped.

It was over in a hurry. Gehrig swung at the first ball thrown to him and drove it against the right-field fence for a solid double. Three runs scored, which tied up the ball game. A few minutes later, a single brought Lou home and the Yanks won the game, 6-5. When the game was over, Bush walked over to the locker where Gehrig, still trembling, was undressing.

"Listen, kid," Bush grinned, "thanks for the game. You may be stupid with the glove, but you can sure pound that ball."

That game-saving double didn't keep Gehrig up in the big time. The aging Wally Pipp was still too classy around first base for Lou even to hope to replace him. Gehrig was sent to Hartford, with instructions to manager Paddy O'Connor from big boss Ed Barrow to put Gehrig on first base and keep him there. O'Connor did, but the way Gehrig con-

ducted himself at bat and in the field almost made Paddy's mind jump the tracks.

"I remember his calling me when I was scouting in South Carolina," Paul Krichell laughed: "Paddy was sure moaning. 'What can this guy do?' he yelled over the phone. 'He can't field, he can't hit his hat, he throws 'em where they ain't. Tell Barrow I got to get rid of him!'"

Krichell was as adamant as Ed Barrow. "He'll hit," he told Paddy. "Just keep him in there."

Early in September, Gehrig's batting average was worse than ever and O'Connor had reached the bursting point. There was a vital Labor Day series beginning on Saturday, and Lou had struck out three times the day before. That night, O'Connor sent a long telegram to Barrow stating how terrible Gehrig had been and asking permission to remove him from the lineup.

It was one of the few times in his life that Lou got a break. Barrow didn't come into his Yankee office that Saturday. Paddy had to leave Gehrig in for the three-game series. That Saturday afternoon, Gehrig poled one over the fence to win the ball game. On Sunday, in a double header, he broke loose with tigerish fury and won both games almost singlehanded. He hit everything—singles, doubles, triples, and home runs.

O'Connor called Barrow on Monday and told him to forget the wire, saying gleefully, "Gehrig has finally come out of the closet." He pitched, played first base, and closed the year hitting .304. Once he almost went over the .500 mark. He wound up the season with 24 home runs in the basket.

There were good reasons why Lou Gehrig couldn't seem to get going the first time he was sent down to Hartford. He was lonely. He was worried about his folks. He was always broke. Harry Hesse was Lou's roommate at Hartford in 1923, the first baseball player to really get to know him. I was lucky enough to get an intimate word-picture of Gehrig from Hesse.

"I was playing first base when Lou came to Hartford," Hesse recalled, "so they moved me into the outfield. I had been rooming with him for several days before I realized the guy didn't have a dime. Not a dime. After his father got over that operation, Lou sent them on the first vacation they ever had. To do it, he had to strip himself down to nothing.

"He didn't have money for clothes," Hesse went on. "He looked like a tramp. When he was in that first slump, I've never seen anyone suffer so much. He took everything to heart. He was a guy who needed friends, but didn't know how to go about getting them. He'd get low and sit hunched over and miserable and it was pretty tough to pull him out of it."

After Gehrig climbed out of the doldrums and began to lambast the

apple, his attitude changed. Hesse got him a date with a girl and he thinks it was the first time Gehrig had ever been out with one of the opposite sex. He hardly spoke a word all evening and when the girl spoke to him, he would blush and fidget.

One night Gehrig gave Hesse the scare of his life. One of the players on the ball club, a man almost as frightful in size and strength as Lou, tucked a few too many beers under his belt and began roaming around the hotel in a half-playful, half-belligerent mood. Hesse and Gehrig had just got into bed when the tipsy player busted into their room.

"I could see he was looking for a tussle," Hesse said, "so I tucked my head under the covers and pretended I was asleep. The guy came over and jumped on top of Gehrig. Suddenly, it got awfully quiet. I rolled over, took a quick look, and froze. Lou's head was thrown back, his legs had a scissor's grip around the guy's middle, and he was squeezing. The guy's face was blue. I let out a yell. Lou relaxed his legs and the guy rolled off the bed, out cold."

It took 10 minutes to bring the player back to consciousness. Gehrig was between tears and panic. He hadn't meant to hurt the guy; he'd just tried to keep him from getting too gay. "But if I hadn't yelled when I did," Hesse said, "Gehrig might have crushed him to death."

During his early days in baseball, Gehrig was utterly naive, completely unaware of his rights as a big-league ballplayer. When in trouble, or low in spirits, he would wander off like a wounded bear. Dan Daniel, the baseball writer who has chronicled so many splendid and revealing tales about the Gehrig personality, told me about meeting him one day in 1924 on a street in New Orleans. Gehrig who had come down to take Spring training with the Yankees, was, as usual, hatless and coatless. He looked very glum.

"What's the trouble, Lou?" Dan inquired.

"Things are pretty tough, Dan," Lou said, shaking his huge head. "I can't seem to find a job, not even washing dishes."

"A job!" the amazed Daniel said. "You belong to the Yankees; you're a ballplayer. You're not supposed to be looking for a job. If you're broke, go see Huggins."

"Oh, I couldn't do that," Gehrig said.

And Gehrig wouldn't. Daniel went to Miller Huggins and told him about meeting Lou and what he'd said. Hug called Gehrig in, gave him a \$100 advance, and told him to stop looking for outside work. During the interview, Huggins learned that Lou had arrived in New Orleans with exactly \$12 and had been trying to get along on that amount for two weeks!

On June 1, 1925, Gehrig was sent in to pinch hit for Pee Wee Wanning in the eighth inning of a game against the Senators. That day, officially, marked the beginning of the magnificent consecutive-game

record of the Yankee Iron Man. The following day, the veteran first-baseman, Wally Pipp, was struck on the side of the head during batting practice. In the locker room, Huggins saw Pipp swallowing a couple of aspirin tablets.

"Take a rest today, Wally," Huggins said. "I'm going to start young Gehrig in your spot."

When the Yankee manager told Lou that he was going to start him in the game and, if he made good, keep him in there as a regular, Gehrig gulped and almost tossed his cookies. There were tears in his eyes as he stumbled up the stairs to the dugout. Huggins was right behind him, saying, "Now take it easy, boy. Don't get rattled. If you muff a few, nobody's going to shoot you."

Gehrig trotted slowly to first base, and thus began a magnificent career. He booted plenty of ground balls that year. Often he looked like an overgrown sandlot player around first base. But Hug kept him in the lineup. He stayed in there because at the plate he followed the pattern he established in that first game, connecting for a double and two singles and rivaling Ruth as a sparkplug for Yankee hitting sprees.

"In the beginning, I used to make one terrible play a game," Gehrig told Quentin Reynolds in 1935. "Then I got so I'd make one a week, and finally I'd pull a bad one about once a month. Now, I'm trying to keep it down to one a season."

Although the kids of the world never idolized Gehrig the way they did Babe Ruth, the kids of his hometown, New York, really loved him. Huggins always liked to tell about the time he caught Lou Gehrig in Central Park playing ball with some teen-agers, after Lou had completed a grueling game with the Yanks. He had the love of the game that all great players have. He couldn't pass a diamond, and the crack of a bat, without wanting to get into the game.

There was never any doubt in Gehrig's mind that the Bam was the greatest home-run hitter of all time. In practice, he would often try to copy the Babe's swing, but this change in style caused him to miss the ball by a foot. In 1927, he told reporters, "The trouble with me is that I'm trying to be a home-run hitter like Babe. Now I'm going to forget those homers and just hit the ball."

It was that year that Ruth reached the pinnacle, clouting the big 60 to Gehrig's 47. In the years that followed, baseball fans held their breath while these two fence busters battled it out for home-run honors. But year after year, it was almost as if Lou Gehrig were playing a previously rehearsed role in winding up second to the Babe.

Gehrig led the league in home runs in 1934 and 1936. For four seasons, he was runner-up in circuit clouts to the Bambino. Once, in 1931, he tied him with 46 four baggers. That year was a heart-breaker, for Gehrig deserved to win the home-run title. A bonehead piece of

business by Gehrig himself and another Yankee robbed him of the crown.

The incident is referred to as the "home run that didn't count." Lyn Lary was on base when Gehrig teed off and hoisted one over the right-field barrier. For some inexplicable reason, Lary thought that the rival fielder had caught Lou's blast. Two were away, so Lyn left the base path as he rounded third and trotted into the Yankee bench. Lou trotted on around the bases, unthinkingly passing the spot where Lary had left the base path. This caused Lary to be ruled automatically out. It ended the inning and crossed Gehrig's homer off the books.

Manager McCarthy, as the newspapermen reported it at the time and Hubler records in his book on Gehrig, rose to heights of stinging sarcasm. "Gentlemen," he purred, "Lary didn't know that Lou had hit a home run. Hereafter we will devise a set of signals so that all will know that a certain ball is tagged for a home run." He paused. "I want no secrets on this team."

Lou, at the time, never realized how much that home run would mean to him at the end of the season. On the last game of the year, in The House That Ruth Built, he was trailing the Babe by just one homer! That day he lifted one over the fence to close the books for the year and tie with Ruth for the championship. It was the closest he ever came to being the home-run champion while the Babe was playing full time. Ruth led the league in home runs 10 times, Gehrig twice.

In 1934, when Ruth was in Yankee uniform only occasionally, Gehrig won his first home-run title, hitting 49. That same year, for the first and only time, he also won the American League batting championship with a .363 average. Before, he had been nosed out of this honor by a few points almost every year since coming into the majors. Again it was a "Last Day" stand, fighting to the last ditch, that won him the championship. Trailing Charlie Gehringer up to the final game of the season, Lou got 3 for 4 in a game against the Senators, and just squeezed through.

After Ruth left, Gehrig was appointed captain of the Yankees. He made heroic attempts to become a colorful, off-hand, likeable, and popular character. But the glare of the spotlight which made Ruth glow and sparkle, only befuddled, confused, and made ludicrous the quiet and retiring Gehrig.

He was voted the most valuable player of the American League four times, but nobody seemed to notice it. The records he was setting, like driving in the most runs of any player of his time, did not excite the interest of many fans. The few times he stumbled into the national limelight, off the playing field, it was for things he'd done that made him look sad and ridiculous.

There was that classic appearance on the radio, for which he was

unceasingly ribbed by players and fans. The makers of a breakfast cereal named "Huskies" hired Lou for a one-shot air appearance to boost their product. Lou was interviewed at great length about his career with the Yankees. Then the announcer led up to the pay-off line with: "Tell me, Lou, to what do you owe your tremendous hitting strength and fine condition?"

The nervous Gehrig, not heeding the script, gulped and answered: "Wheaties."

It brought the house down. Laughter shook the nation for weeks. That one, natural slip earned Lou the reputation of being one of the most complete dunces ever to enter the ranks of the celebrities. Lou felt wretched about his mistake. He even sent back the fee he had been paid for his appearance on the program. The breakfast food company wouldn't accept it, however, because the publicity, at Gehrig's expense, was worth a fortune.

Gehrig followed that one up with a fling at the movies. While the sportswriters snickered, Lou's manager, Christy Walsh, posed the big fellow in a leopard skin and announced that he was going to replace Johnny Weissmuller as the new Tarzan. Lou took it all very seriously. The glamour of the movie business fascinated him. It looked like the quick way to become adored by millions. Wouldn't it be wonderful if a stodgy guy like himself could scale the heights of film stardom?

This was the childhood dream. This was what he must have yearned for when he sat in the darkened movie theaters, a fat, little boy, a mediocrity, unnoticed and unloved. But he should have known that it was never in the books for him to spring to glory like a meteor. The Tarzan episode brought him only ridicule. In 1937, he did star in a horse opera called "Rawhide," which the movie critics panned and the fans ignored. The Yankee players and those on other teams rode him unmercifully about his movie aspirations. He could only show them the twisted grin and shake his head.

It is somewhat ironic that one of the most successful motion pictures ever made, "Pride of the Yankees," was based on Lou Gehrig's life. He would have been thrilled by that movie. It would have meant more to him than anything else in the world. He was an honest guy. He wanted and needed the love of the common people from whom he came. He yearned to be known and appreciated and remembered.

In 1933, at the age of 30, Gehrig married Eleanor Twitchell, the warm-hearted, loyal, and wonderful woman who was to mean so much to him during the twilight of his life. She was the opposite of Lou—a vivacious, brown-eyed, auburn-haired girl who had money and social position and a talent for being able to mix easily with people. When Lou met her, she was managing a large Chicago apartment house, which she owned.

It took four years for the bashful Gehrig to reach the point, with her help, of stumbling through a proposal of marriage. He first met her at a party in Chicago in 1929. He sat with her for quite a long time, but could think of nothing to say. He met Eleanor again at a friend's house in 1932. Again he was tongue-tied. One night, many months later, he called her long distance and talked a little more easily. In 1933, Eleanor was visiting a friend on Long Island, and Lou began to drop in to see her. One night, shortly before she returned to Chicago, Eleanor guided him through the necessary words that constitute a proposal.

"It began," she related long after they were married, "with talk about baseball. Even when proposing, in stating his qualifications as a potential husband, Lou spoke disparagingly of himself as a ballplayer. It finally got around to my asking him if what he was trying to say was that he wanted to marry me. He nodded his head, and told me that was it. Then he kissed me and ran for the door."

On the day the engagement was announced, Eleanor was in the stands watching Lou play. He hit a home run for her, and waved to her as he crossed the plate. It was one of the happiest days of his life and, for once, nothing jinxed it. The fans and players and reporters were very decent about it. Nobody kidded him or made him feel uncomfortable.

The marriage was planned for the 30th of September, but Lou couldn't face the thought of the formal ceremony that was being arranged. The day before it was to come off, he talked Eleanor into calling in the mayor of New Rochelle and marrying them quietly. She agreed. They were married in the presence of a few friends and the carpenters and painters and decorators who had been hired to dress up the house for the big event.

"Less than an hour after we were married, Lou was on his way to the Stadium to play baseball," Eleanor said.

The Iron Horse continued to drive himself. His incredible record kept mounting. Hits crashed off his bat with machinelike regularity. When it was over, he had driven in close to 2,000 runs, made 2,721 hits, 1,190 of them for extra bases! He had crossed the plate 1,888 times and poled 494 home runs. For eight years, he played in more games than any man in the league. In seven of those years, he drove in more than 150 runs.

Perhaps Gehrig's greatest thrill, the one he talked the most about after his retirement, was the home run he hit off Dizzy Dean in the 1937 All-Star game. It was quite a moment. The steady, reliable, quiet, work-horse facing the most quixotic, brash, and colorful player since the days of Ruth. It was a pitiful and tragic afternoon for the Great Diz, the one in which he was struck by a line drive, the afternoon he wrenched that magnificent arm. Gehrig's smash into the right-field bleachers rang down

the curtain on the old fireballer. Lou seemed to have a knack of being around when tragedy struck.

"Gehrig will go on forever," the sportswriters said. "Short of being hit by a locomotive, nothing will stop him."

What stopped him was deadlier than any man-made machine. It was a tiny virus, so mysterious and elusive that it has not yet been seen by microbe hunters after centuries of search. One of the things that is known about it is that it usually attacks the strongest and healthiest of human beings.

During the latter part of the 1938 season, the disease began to work on Gehrig. He began to lose his great strength, his tremendous energy and drive. Sometimes his hand would tremble as he held a coffee cup and he would drop it. On the baseball field, he would be overcome by lethargy. His coordination—the thing he had worked so hard to learn—would fail him. Only his great willpower enabled him to muster the energy to get through a game.

"Please give yourself a rest, Lou," his wife pleaded with him. "Your record is safe. You need a rest."

"I've got to go on playing," he said. "I've got to work myself out of this."

He went on, game after game, ashamed of the way he looked out there. He told Johnny Schulte that every time he went to bat, he felt that all the fans in the stands could hear him creak.

What did Gehrig think of during the days when he began to falter? Of an era passed, of a time when Dempsey was the heavyweight champion of the world, when the stock market was at its height, when names like Cobb, Meusel, Speaker, Grove, Combs were making sport headlines, and the Babe and Buster were the two greatest batters in the world? Perhaps he thought, as he hit a miserable pop fly, of that day in 1927 in Pittsburgh when little Miller Huggins, the wily strategist, had sent him and the Babe out to terrify the Pirates during batting practice.

"See how many balls you guys can put up there," Hug had said, pointing to the upper deck of the right-field bleachers.

Ruth went up first and parked a half-dozen long drives in the upper stands.

"Okay, kid," the Babe had beamed as the Pirates stood gaping in amazement, "Now show 'em how you do it."

And he had gone up there and lammed five drives, landing them almost on the same seats where Ruth's had bounced. It had been so easy then. The eye was sharp, the muscles worked so smoothly. It had been hit, hit, hit, for over a decade. What was happening?

Spring training in 1939 was a nightmare for Gehrig. The ball slipped out of his fingers or went through his wobbly legs. He would swing

with a superhuman effort, but even when he connected it would be a scraggly sort of pop fly. His feet began to drag. His legs would give way suddenly. A frightened look would come over his face. He'd look like a kid who had been unexpectedly slapped.

The season opened with Gehrig still in the line-up. After a day at the park, he would come home looking weak, stunned. He was afraid, terribly afraid. Eleanor, who had been pleading with him to quit so that they could find out what the trouble was, couldn't get through to him.

"Sometimes he would break down and cry," she said. "But he would be back at the ball park the next day, trying harder."

The players on the Yankees suffered with him. One of them told how Lou, stooping over to tie his shoe one day before the game, fell flat on his face. Everyone pretended not to notice it. When he floundered around on the field, tripped over his own feet, fell down when walking to the plate to take his cut, they all felt his pain and embarrassment and shriveled up inside. Manager Joe McCarthy didn't take him out of the line-up. He knew that would really break Lou. He knew, and the players knew, that they were witnessing a terrible private contest.

He played eight games in 1939. He hit safely four times—measly clouts that took more effort than the longest homer he had ever made. His average was .143.

Gehrig played his last game against the Washington Senators on April 30, 1939. On May 2, he stopped Manager McCarthy in the lobby of a Detroit hotel. He had been waiting for over an hour. His face was pale, his hands shook, but he got the grin up.

"You'd better take me out, Joe," he said. "I guess that's all."

That afternoon in Briggs Stadium Babe Dahlgren was at first base for the Yankees. An epic had ended. An immortal had stepped down. Sports-writers on copy desks across the country, men in small towns who had never even seen him play, read the wire services release and felt a lump in their throats.

2,130 consecutive games. It wasn't possible to laugh off that performance. You couldn't see a record like that one crumble without feeling something inside.

Lefty Gomez, who had enjoyed kidding him over the years, whose wisecracks had sometimes been barbed, sat down on the bench beside him that afternoon, "Hell, Lou," he said gruffly, putting an arm around Gehrig's shoulder, "it took 15 years to get you out of the game. Sometimes I'm out in 15 minutes."

That June, on his thirty-sixth birthday, Lou left the Mayo Clinic where he had gone for an examination. He was given a sealed envelope containing X-ray pictures and a diagnosis of his disease. The official Mayo report read:

"He is suffering from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. This type of illness

involves the motor pathways and cells of the central nervous system and in lay terms is known as a form of chronic poliomyelitis (infantile paralysis). The nature of this trouble makes it such that Mr. Gehrig will be unable to continue his active participation as a baseball player. . . ."

It also meant that he had only two or three years to live. Gehrig was never told this. His wife zealously kept this knowledge from him to the end.

Lou returned to the Yankees. As the captain of the team, he walked to the plate before every game and handed the umpire the line-up. The applause of the fans was thunderous. For the first time, he was able to realize the extent of his achievements. He was deeply moved and extremely grateful. "In his own way," his wife said, "he was happy."

The Yanks voted Lou a share of their 1939 World Series money. It was about the only time in his life that Lou Gehrig got something for which he had not worked hard. But that's probably putting it wrong. Sitting on the bench during that World Series was probably the hardest job of his life.

In December, 1939, the Baseball Writers of America waived the ruling that a baseball player must be out of play for a year before he can be eligible for baseball's Hall of Fame. They voted Lou Gehrig a permanent spot at Cooperstown.

They knew how short his time was. They wanted to do what they could for him before he died.

The last time this writer saw Lou Gehrig alive was at his Centre Street office when Lou was doing a job as a member of Mayor LaGuardia's New York City Parole Commission. He was friendly and cheerful. He talked about baseball as though he were still playing it. He was enthusiastic about the work he was doing. He understood and had deep compassion for those who, like himself, had grown up in squalor and poverty. He knew the cause of most crimes. Few men so well understood frustration and loneliness and deprivation.

He was a man who believed in working for everything he got. He could have taken the hundreds of offers that came in, of cushy jobs at fancy salaries. He was paid \$5,700 a year as a Parole Commissioner and he took it only after three months of study had convinced him that he could do some good on the job.

He stayed behind his desk until he was helpless, until he couldn't move his hands. His voice, if you happen ever to have spoken to him and remember it, was always very gentle and soft. It became softer.

Late in 1940, it became impossible for him even to move around, and he had to give up his position. He remained at his home in Riverdale, where his wife read to him by the hour, because he could no longer hold a book in his hands. He was humorous and sheepish about it. There was almost no self-pity, but now and then he would smile wist-

fully and remark to his wife, "I wonder what the guys at the ball park would think of me now."

Sometimes, in the night, he thought he could hear the voices of his childhood—the shouts of Tony, Goose and the rest of the gang who went clamming with him on the mudflats, or swam with him off the docks on the river, or played ball with him on the steaming streets of the city.

When you live life slowly and carefully, if you are a silent and observant child, you can remember 'way back almost to the beginning.

The way his life ended was so different from the way it had begun. The childish eyes had seen only drabness and want. Now the gay, the wise, the wealthy, the flashy, the brilliant and talented citizens of the land came to his house. As life began to flow out of him, his wife, Eleanor, did all she could to keep him amused and unaware of the fact that the game would soon be called because of darkness.

Famous Broadway stars, sports people, comedians, magicians, and song writers moved through the Gehrig home. Eleanor entertained feverishly. She gave cocktail parties and buffet suppers. Friends crowded into Lou's room, sat on his bed, on chairs, on the floor, told stories, sang songs, pulled gags, and kept him company all through his waking hours.

"The house was like a circus," Eleanor Gehrig said, "but they were all welcome. I wanted to keep Lou busy, and I wanted to keep him entertained. All the activity kept me from thinking too."

During the clamor and gayety and slapstick antics, Lou would sometimes catch Eleanor's eye and his mouth would twist into the shy grin. His eyes were calm; his face, when not showing pain, was cheerful. His wife is still certain that he did not know he was going to die. Of course, nobody told him. But suppose he had known? Was there anything that could be said? He was not a guy who knew how to put emotion into words, unless it involved something that would help others.

By the end of May, in 1941, he became too ill to see his friends. On the morning of June 2, he passed into a coma. At 10 o'clock that night, the big body was lifeless.

It had been a beautiful, cloudless day, perfect baseball weather. But Yankee Stadium was empty and silent all that afternoon. Lou Gehrig's team was out in Cleveland playing a hard-fought, thrill-packed game against the Indians. Bobby Feller was on the mound against them and they lost the game, 7-5. Late that night, the Yankees learned they had lost more than a ball game.

Crowds gathered that week on a New York street to pay tribute to Lou Gehrig. Gangs of kids were clustered on the sidewalk in front of the funeral parlor. A long, black limousine pulled up and Babe Ruth climbed out. As always, the kids rushed the Babe, begging for autographs. For once in his life, the Babe shook his head, brushed by them, and went inside to have his final look at another "kid" who had

once shared some very special and very wonderful days with him.

Christina Gehrig was there. She had outlived all of her children, even the one who had grown up to become so strong and famous.

What is there, finally, to say about Lou Gehrig, Christina's son? That he was a remarkable baseball player, an incredible performer in so many World Series? He was more than that. He was simply a very ordinary, good human being, a man whose only inheritance was unusual physical strength, a capacity for hard work, a willingness to sacrifice and learn.

Lou Gehrig was a baseball player who lived in a hard and crass era. But he became immortal because somehow he managed to touch and soften the heart of everyone who heard his name.

Two Guys Named TED WILLIAMS

By Ed Fitzgerald

WHAT kind of a guy is Ted Williams? Brother, all I can say is he can play on my team any day in the week. Didja ever see that guy hit? I'm tellin' ya, he ain't human. They say he's got camera eyes, and I'm willin' to believe it. I seen him in that All-Star game—you know, when he got them two homers and two singles. That was the day he belted one off Rip Sewell's blooper. Happy? He laughed all the way around the bases. He's another Babe Ruth, that kid.

* * *

What kind of a guy is Ted Williams? Listen, Mac, when bigger jerks are made, I don't want any part of them. That guy's nuts. He oughta be put away. Sure, I know he can hit. But only when he feels like it. And did you ever see the bum in the field? He couldn't catch a ball with a bushel basket. And what's more, I hear the other guys on the club hate his guts. I guess he thinks he's too good for them or something. All I know is if I was Yawkey I'd can the bum. He'd never play ball for me.

* * *

This is an attempt at an honest report on the most controversial baseball figure of our time, Ted Williams of the Boston Red Sox. It's a report a lot of people may not like because most fans already have formed violent opinions of their own about the Boston slugger. And this is neither a pro-Williams nor an anti-Williams article.

I approached this assignment with an open mind. I had never met Ted Williams. All I knew about him was what I'd read in the newspapers and I've known for a long time that it doesn't pay to believe everything you read in the papers. I had, of course, seen him play, many times. Sometimes I admired what I saw him do on the field; other times I was unimpressed.

So I started from scratch. First I read all the books and articles I could find that contained material on Ted. Then I invaded newspaper

morgues, poring over stacks of clippings about his career. I studied record books, publicity handouts, and baseball trade publications, soaking up information about things he'd done and things he'd said.

Then I stuffed my pockets with blank sheets of paper and started talking to people. I went to Boston and talked to the Red Sox official family. I talked to the guys who ran the elevators and sold newspapers and tended bar in Boston's old Copley Plaza Hotel. I talked to cops, taxi-drivers, and shoe-shine boys around town. I talked to Johnny Orlando, the Red Sox clubhouse boy. I talked to newspapermen and I talked to fans. I asked them all what they thought of Ted Williams—and I collected such a bewildering variety of answers that for a while I thought I was worse off than when I started.

Then I took a week off. I dropped the story completely. I'd been so close to it for so long, I was afraid maybe I couldn't see the forest for the trees. Then I picked up my notes and went over the whole business again and suddenly I began to see things weren't as confused as I feared. When I looked at what I had objectively, without passion, I realized I could stop trying to make up my mind whether this complex character was a hero or a heel. I saw, suddenly, just what the real story of Ted Williams was.

It takes a lot of telling because there's a lot to tell. The long, lean, 30-year-old athlete who wallops baseballs out of the ball park in exchange for a pay check of approximately \$75,000 from the Boston Red Sox is one of the most fascinating characters in American sport. It's possible to love, or at least admire, him, and it's equally possible to hate, or at least dislike, him. The problem, therefore, is—why?

To make the two definite sides of the Ted Williams story easier to follow, I propose to take up his case the way you might take it up in a court of justice, with the prosecution—or anti-Williams—side first. Then we'll hear from the defense—or pro-Williams—side. After that, we'll look at the guy himself and see if we can figure out what it all adds up to.

Briefly, here's the case for the prosecution:

Ted, who is known as The Kid in Boston, has never grown up. He is subject to childish fits of temper and is inconsistent in such departments as good humor, cooperation, and perseverance. At least three times he's been yanked from ball games by Joe Cronin for offenses like failing to run out an infield hit, loafing after fly balls, and swinging half-heartedly at pitches when he was in one of his frequent tizzies. He has never shown himself able to take adversity like a man. He invariably yaps back at any fan who has the nerve to criticize his not-always-flawless play.

The ancient right of the customer to beef at the performer is as much a part of baseball as the three-strike rule. Terrible Ted, however, does not recognize this right. He has often demonstrated that he would like

to have it changed so that any jeering fan would be hauled out of his seat, given two in the chops, and dragged off to the pokey.

Needless to say, many fans disagree violently with Ted's viewpoint. For instance, Curt Noyes of Marblehead, Massachusetts, wrote a letter to Dave Egan, sports editor of the *Boston Record*, which said in part:

"Williams, the all-time, All-American adolescent, will never wear a necktie, unless he wears it to bed. He'll never tip his cap to the guys who pay his overstuffed salary. He'll never bunt, steal, hustle, or take a sign . . . unless it suits his own royal convenience. In short, he'll continue to be just what he's always been . . . the prize heel ever to wear a Boston uniform . . ."

Egan himself, the stormy petrel of Boston's sportswriters (and that's saying a lot, because the journalists in that town are not renowned for their gentle nature), has for a long time campaigned to get Williams out of the Hub. Blunt, plain-talking Dave thinks the lanky kid from San Diego does the Red Sox more harm than good, even if he does swing a mean bat.

Unquestionably, thousands of Boston fans agree with Egan. Many of them like Ted, of course. But an awful lot of them would just as soon spit in his eye as shake his hand. This troubles The Thumper not at all. "Damned New England buzzards," is one of the more polite phrases he has used to describe the paying customers. ✓

It's not easy to find out exactly what relations prevail between Ted and his teammates. After careful investigation, I reached the conclusion that it's like everything else about the guy—a little of this and a little of that. Some of the players like him fine, some of them think he's a little unusual but all right, and some of them would like to kick him in the pants.

I talked to a couple of Red Sox ballplayers about Ted, but they were understandably reluctant to say much. That is, except the ones who liked him. The others changed the subject. One of them though, who for obvious reasons will have to remain anonymous, admitted there are plenty of guys on the club who could do without Williams very well.

You get nowhere, of course, pursuing this line of questioning with the Red Sox officials. It is impossible to guess whether they really mean it or not, but they all religiously follow the party line. Williams, they will have you know, is not only the greatest ballplayer of his generation, but also the greatest guy you'd ever want to meet. He has no faults. He's just misunderstood. The writers pick on him. He loves everybody, and everybody loves him.

There may be some truth in all that, but for my dough it's mixed up with a hell of a lot of hogwash. The most charitable explanation I can see for the party line is that it stems from over-enthusiasm blended with a natural desire to look after one's investments.

When Ted first hit a Red Sox training camp, he picked up a reputation as a "fresh guy" that he's never been able to shake. You know the stories that are told about his antics in that Spring of 1938. He's supposed to have run into Bobby Doerr, a friend of his from the Pacific Coast League.

"Wait till you see this guy Foxx hit!" Doerr raved.

"Wait till Foxx sees me hit!" bragged Williams.

That kind of stuff follows a guy around. The first thing he knows, the boys are lying in wait for him, baiting him, encouraging him to say something even funnier. And all the time they're going around spreading the word that he's a clown, and it isn't doing his reputation any good. That's part of what happened to Ted Williams. But it's only part of it. Most of the Williams legend was hand-tailored by Teddy himself.

The fireman story, for instance. Back in 1940, Ted visited an uncle of his who was a fireman in Mount Vernon, New York. He must have liked what he saw because a few days later he petulantly complained to a reporter that he'd a lot rather be a fireman than a ballplayer. Of course, he didn't really mean it. It was just that his fireman-uncle had been lounging comfortably in the sun in front of the firehouse when Ted saw him, and Ted—who was having his troubles getting a hit in a series at Yankee Stadium—thought it looked like an ideal existence.

Like so many other things he has said or done impulsively, Ted lived to regret the fireman crack. Jimmy Dykes, the fun-loving manager of the Chicago White Sox (now coaching for the Philadelphia Athletics), went to work on him with a vengeance. When the Red Sox visited Chicago, Dykes outfitted his bench jockeys with fire helmets and raincoats, and equipped them with a loud siren which they operated gleefully every time Williams came to bat.

A story that reflects the opinions of some of the Red Sox players about their big star concerns a day the Boston club was playing the Athletics at Shibe Park in Philadelphia. Ted was one of the first Boston players to walk into the dugout before the game. Dom DiMaggio, Bobby Doerr, and Johnny Pesky were with him. DiMag, Doerr, and Pesky jumped out on the playing field and were greeted by a friendly chorus of cheers. Seconds later, Williams stuck his head above the dugout steps. The house shook under the impact of a barrage of sincere boos.

Said a Red Sox player sitting on the bench: "That's an excellent example of the early worm catching the bird."

I asked the Boston front office for some help in locating Ted a couple of months ago. "Well," I was told, "he's either in Princeton, Minnesota, which is his wife's hometown; the Black Hills of South Dakota; or Florida. At least, probably he is."

Which gives you a reasonably clear idea of the degree of responsibility Ted feels toward his ball club. The Red Sox pay him lavishly for

working six months out of the year, but he doesn't think it's necessary (or even advisable) to let them know where he is at any given time.

Few of his fans thought any more highly of Ted when it became known that the great man went fishing in Florida while his wife journeyed to Boston to await the birth of their first child in the early part of 1948.

The fans and writers who were dismayed by Ted's un-paternal behavior while his wife was awaiting their child grew really harsh in their judgments when the Williams baby, a daughter named Barbara Joyce, was born prematurely on Wednesday, January 28—with Ted still in Florida! Even the more charitable observers shook their heads and said: "You'd think he could have interrupted his vacation long enough to be around when the kid was born!"

Not since the Sacco-Vanzetti case has Boston been rocked so severely by a single controversy. Well, not since *Forever Amber* was banned there, anyway.

Harold Kaese, writing in the *Boston Globe*, said: "Everybody knows where Moses was when the lights went out, and apparently everybody knows where Ted Williams was when his baby was born here yesterday. He was fishing."

Instantly leaping to Ted's defense, the Red Sox front office insisted the baby wasn't due until February 15, that Ted had planned to fly to Boston on February 5 to be on hand for the big event, and that it was a tough break for him when the child was born almost a month ahead of time.

The young woman most concerned about it all seemed the least concerned. Doris Williams, interviewed at the hospital, was as happy as any young mother.

"She has Ted's eyes and my mouth," she told reporters, "but she really doesn't look like anybody yet."

Mrs. Williams confirmed the club's statement that the baby hadn't been expected until February 15. Just the same, the incident didn't make Ted look any better in the eyes of his fans.

Informed of the public's reaction when he finally arrived in Boston to see his wife and new-born child, Ted growled: "To hell with the public. They can't run my life." He told reporters he planned to visit briefly with his wife and daughter, then return to Miami because "this place is too cold for me, and besides, the fishing is great down there."

Writing about the mighty macer's odd behavior, Paul Gallico said sternly: "You are not a nice fellow, Brother Williams. I do believe that baseball and the sports pages would be better off without you."

"Where you are wrong in saying that the public cannot run your life is that we can. For I am a part of that public and I would no longer invest ten cents to see you ply your trade because I have an aversion

to finding myself in the same inclosure with a self-confessed mucker."

Then Paul let go with his high, hard one. "When, oh when will you thick-headed athletes catch on that the public is your darling, that you may not disillusion us, that you cannot live as other men but dwell in glass houses and that this is the price you pay for wealth and success?"

Williams has a positive genius for getting into situations. In his first years with the Red Sox, he got into trouble not only with the fans, but even with the law, for persistently shooting the pigeons which nest in all the nooks and crannies of Fenway Park.

Decidedly not on the good side is Ted's conspicuous coolness to rival stars on his own team. Boston writers noticed that Williams was anything but encouraging toward little Johnny Pesky when the sharp-hitting shortstop was pressing him for the club's batting leadership in 1942.

It may not mean much to the average fan, but most sportswriters agree that Ted's unwillingness to cooperate even a little bit with the press detracts from his value to the Red Sox. One Boston writer told me he went into the club's dressing room with a few of his colleagues one day when Ted was in a batting slump, hoping to interview the slugger. When the request was conveyed to Ted, his prompt and gracious reply was: "Throw them out."

The editors of *SPORT Magazine* learned something about Ted's unreliability last year when they tossed a large luncheon for advertising executives in Beantown. A Boston representative of the magazine got in touch with Sergeant John Blake of the Massachusetts State Police, who is one of Ted's closest buddies. Sergeant Blake was asked if he thought Williams could be coaxed into making an appearance at the luncheon.

"I don't know," he said. "But I'll ask him."

Subsequently the sergeant called the magazine representative and told him it was okay, Ted would be there. Sergeant Blake explained that Williams had to go to a baseball dinner that night, but he would come to the luncheon as well. Everyone thought it was mighty cooperative of Ted.

It would have been, too, except that he didn't show up.

There were about 800 important Boston businessmen at the luncheon, all of them expecting to see and maybe hear the great Ted Williams. Almost any responsible person would have notified the people in charge that he couldn't make it. But not Ted Williams. He just didn't bother to go. Nobody, of course, ever has accused Ted of being a responsible person.

If you're a Ted Williams fan, you may chuckle at such stories and say, "Well, the kid's a little eccentric, but he doesn't mean any harm." The trouble is, when he insults the customers, alienates the reporters who publicize the games, and allows his fractious disposition to inter-

fere with the efficiency of his play, he's giving neither the Red Sox nor the fans full value for their dough.

I found Ted's part-time business manager, Freddie Corcoran, of the PGA, extremely friendly but he wouldn't give out any information covering the interesting parts of Ted's life.

"He doesn't like to get into anything at all controversial," Corcoran said. "He'll be glad to talk about the Boudreau Shift, and how it's hard for a right-field hitter to try pushing them into left. And he'll talk about Joe McCarthy, and how he's always had a lot of respect for Joe, for whom he once played on an All-Star team. But nothing personal, you know."

And, of course, it was only the personal stuff I wanted. All the rest of it—the averages and the home-run totals and the runs-batted-in—you can find in the record books. But you'll never find the answer to the riddle of Ted Williams in anybody's record book and finding that answer was the only thing that interested me.

Corcoran couldn't help me get in touch with Ted's wife, either. "Ted wouldn't like that," he said. "He wouldn't like that at all . . ."

Shifting now to the defense, we find that the witnesses here all feel just as strongly about Ted as those who enjoy taking pot shots at The Kid. But that's the only common ground shared by the pro-Williams and anti-Williams camps.

Sam Mele, who plays in the Boston outfield with Ted, looked around the neat brick interior of Toots Shor's and gave his roast beef hash a few minutes to settle while he thought about what to tell me.

"It's hard to say just what I feel about Ted," Sam said. "He's done so many nice things for me. He's gone out of his way to help me, to give me tips, to make me feel at home on the club. Things he didn't have to do. He's a great guy. No kiddin', I love him."

Sam was scornful of the oft-repeated story that Ted refused to associate with his teammates off the field. "Well," he said, "all I know is he's had me up to his place for dinner a lot during the season. And I went to the fights with him and his wife, not only in Boston, but in Sarasota, too, during Spring training. I had fun with them. They're swell people."

Sam reported that when he was a rookie, first up with the Red Sox, he was in the batting cage taking a few cuts at the ball when he was bawled out by Al Simmons. Mele had been fouling off a lot of pitches, so he was staying in there until he hit his quota of fair balls. But Simmons, waiting to hit next, got impatient.

"Hey!" he yelled. "You gonna stay in there all day?"

Williams, waiting behind Simmons, strode up to the cage and called in to Sam: "Stay right in there, kid. Hit all you're supposed to hit!"

That doesn't sound like the action of a selfish jerk with a king complex, does it?

You should hear Johnny Orlando, who takes care of the Boston club's equipment, on the subject of Ted Williams. Johnny is sold on Ted—with a capital S.

Orlando has been around Fenway Park since 1925, so he's seen a lot of them come and go. "I was bat boy for the Sox," he told me, "when Eddie Collins was playing second base for Chicago, and I was here when Joe Cronin was the Washington shortstop."

Johnny thinks Ted Williams is not only the greatest guy who ever played ball, but one of the most misunderstood persons who ever walked the face of the earth. He has nothing but contempt for the way newspaper reporters criticize the slugger from San Diego.

"It ain't that he don't want to be friendly," Johnny explained. "It's just that he hates front-runners. He don't like people who run up and make a big fuss over him when he's done something good. Now, take me. I never shook his hand once after he hit a home run. Never once. He don't need it then. It's after he goes oh-for-five that I talk to him. That's when he needs it, not when he's doin' good. But a lot of people don't understand that."

Johnny, who is no raw youngster and who unquestionably knows the score, insists that underneath his sometimes brash exterior Ted is essentially a shy guy. "He don't hang out with the big shots, like some guys do. He hangs out with the kids in the clubhouse, with cops, firemen, and taxi-drivers. You know, the plain people. That's the kind of people he likes. On the road, he eats most of his meals in his room because he don't like to have everybody making a fuss over him in the dining room."

It's a cinch Johnny knows Ted well. He pals around with the celebrated slugger about 90 percent of the time. The two are fast friends. And when you listen to this hard-working guy talk about Williams, you can see genuine devotion in his eyes. To him, Ted can do no wrong.

"When he first came here," said Johnny, "he used to take a bunch of us clubhouse boys out fishing. He'd hire a boat and the crew, all the tackle, and lay in sandwiches and stuff for the whole gang. Must have cost him three or four hundred dollars. And you didn't see him calling up the newspapers to come and take pictures, either."

Johnny runs out of adjectives when he tries to tell you how generous Ted is with money. Searching for the right way to say what he meant, Orlando told me: "All I can say is, he gave money before he got in the money." Which says a great deal.

As most baseball fans know by now, Williams handed Johnny a modest tip of \$2,500 after the Red Sox lost the 1946 World Series to the St. Louis Cardinals. And each Boston player's cut in that Series was exactly \$2,077.06! (I mention that, by the way, not to discredit Orlando's testimony, but rather to prove the accuracy of what he says.)

Tom Dowd, the good-natured traveling secretary of the Red Sox, has

nothing but praise for the Splendid Splinter—both as a ballplayer and as a man.

"In the years I've taken this club on the road," says Dowd, "he's never objected to his room location, never been critical of his rail space, though it's true he always get a lower, and never offered any complaints at all about the way he's treated. If a guy is a prima donna, which is the rap the newspapers try to hang on Williams, this is where it usually shows up. Lots of guys behave themselves in public but act up something fierce when they're out of the limelight. I found that Williams is always easy to get along with."

It seemed to me that Tom had his finger on something important when he said the writers who are critical of Ted simply refuse to allow him the frailties of ordinary human beings. "Other people can pop off, or throw things when they get angry," Tom pointed out, "and it's okay. But let Williams show the slightest sign of temper, and they pounce on him." Dowd may have something there.

"I've never known him to utter any bitterness toward a fellow player or toward any other player in the league," said Tom. "There's not an ounce of braggadocio about him. He even walks with his head down, looking at the sidewalk."

Dowd undertook to straighten me out on one point which had interested me particularly. Whenever I talked to a hotly pro-Williams man, I wondered how he'd explain Ted's absence from the victory party the Red Sox staged in Cleveland the night they clinched the American League championship in September, 1946. That seemed to me to be a clear-cut indication that Ted leans toward the anti-social side.

The Red Sox, you'll remember, were breezing home to their first pennant in 28 years. For a while it looked as though they'd nail down the flag as early as September 6 or 7, but the club ran into an unaccountable bad streak. Washington beat the Sox once, and the Athletics put the boot to them twice.

Undisturbed, the Bostonians headed for Detroit, where they were certain they'd clinch the pennant. Tom Yawkey made elaborate plans for a big victory party there. Dowd was ordered to put a stack of champagne on ice and hold it in readiness, which he did. But the Red Sox promptly lost two straight to the Tigers. It was getting embarrassing.

It got more embarrassing when the boys moved to Cleveland and had their cars pinned back by Rapid Robert Feller. That made it six in a row on the losing side—and the champagne was still on ice. Tom Yawkey was traveling with the club, itching to throw the big binge, and he was getting more impatient every day.

The suspense ended finally on Friday, September 13, when the Red Sox spilled the Indians, 1-0, on a Ted Williams home run. The homer was hit to left field against the Lou Boudreau Shift, sailing safely over

Pat Seerey's head into the undefended territory where Ted wasn't supposed to hit. That afternoon, the Yanks licked second-place Detroit, and the Sox were in.

Actually, the Boston boys had to huddle by their radios for a couple of hours before they knew they had the flag. The Yankee-Tiger game started later than the game in Cleveland. But when the final out was made at Detroit, the lid was off for the Red Sox. It was a joyous occasion for them, and the champagne started to flow at a party hastily arranged in the Hotel Statler by Secretary Dowd. The only trouble with the party was that Williams didn't show.

Dowd explains this by saying the interval between the finish of the Boston-Cleveland game, and the finish of the New York-Detroit game, left time for the Red Sox to scatter. It was, he points out, a tough job to round them all up for the party. "I couldn't find Pesky until seven o'clock," he told me, "and I wasn't able to get Williams at all. He was visiting some old fishing friends, and I didn't locate him until he returned to the hotel that night to go to bed."

That's Dowd's story, and he ought to know. But there are other stories, too many of them not to make a dispassionate observer wonder a little. For instance, it was reported at the time that Ted was visiting a hospital. And it has been said by reliable newspapermen that Ted was still in the Hotel Statler—and very much aware of what was going on—when the word came that the Red Sox were in. Certainly it would not require much deduction for him to assume there would be a party that night.

No matter how "the defense" explains the story of the victory party, it's hard to make it come out to Williams' credit. After all, the Red Sox had carted that champagne around for almost a week. It was no secret to Williams that a big bust was scheduled for the hour the pennant was won. The casual observer cannot help but feel he didn't try very hard to get there. In fact, it's hard to disagree with the people who insist he tried very hard *not* to be there.

Ed Doherty, who used to be publicity director of the Red Sox and now runs their farm club at Scranton, Pennsylvania, in the Eastern League, told me some interesting stuff about Ted. Ed, who had something to do with getting Williams into the Navy (from which he transferred to the Marine Corps after winning his wings), says: "I like the perseverance of the kid." Which is interesting, because a lot of people don't think Teddy is much of a hand at persevering.

Doherty points out that Ted had the benefit of only two years in high school as far as education was concerned. Yet he was able to win a commission in Naval Aviation. "He did it by hitting the books like mad," says Doherty. "He went to school at night after ball games back in 1942, and he didn't play ball in the service because he had to work like hell to make the grade."

It was to Doherty that Ted made his famous statement: "I don't see that hitting .400 is so hot. It's only four out of ten. You work for Yawkey, too. You do four out of ten jobs right, and you're out in the street on your tail. I do four out of ten jobs right, and I'm a great hitter."

Doherty told me, "I know all about the stories they tell blasting Williams, but on the level I think he's a great kid. The newspapers brought this thing on themselves."

By "this thing" Doherty meant the hard-to-handle reputation that has been draped around the Boston Beauty. Ed compared the newspaper treatment of Williams to the way the scribes used to go to work on Lefty Grove. "It's the same situation," he insisted. "It took Grove a dozen years longer to mellow than it would have if the baseball writers had left him alone."

There may be a lot to be said for Doherty's point of view. Certainly it is shared by many another competent observer. But it's difficult to prove that a writer is guilty of any moral crime—or is even off base—when he hasn't done anything but tell what happened.

Sure, the writers whooped it up in the public prints when Ted first showed signs of what may charitably be described as an unusual personality. What else could they be expected to do? News is where you find it and nobody would read the sports pages if the boys never wrote about any but well-behaved athletes.

It is, however, unfortunate that Ted got in bad with the typewriter brigade at the very start of his career. A collision like that leaves lasting effects. Because all sportswriters have been accustomed to think of Williams as a pouting schoolboy, they instinctively think the worst whenever he becomes involved in any new incident.

For example, I noticed that one famous writer waxed poetic in print over the sad lot of Joe DiMaggio, who has to hang around the clubhouse for two or three hours after every game lest the autograph hounds tear the poor guy limb from limb.

And then I read the indignant, sizzling prose of another accredited critic who stormed in print that Ted Williams was an arrogant, spoiled so-and-so who would sit in the clubhouse for hours after a game rather than do his bounden duty by the cute little tykes hanging around outside with their pads and pencils. You'd think what's good for the goose would be good for the gander, but it ain't necessarily so.

How can smart baseball people hold stubbornly to such opposite viewpoints on Ted Williams? How is it possible for one man to tell you vehemently that he's a no-good bum who should be dunked in the nearest lake, and the next man to argue just as passionately that he's the greatest hitter *and* the greatest guy baseball has ever known, adding bitterly that the poor kid is just misunderstood?

That's the big Williams question, and it took a lot of soul-searching

before I finally arrived at a satisfactory answer. My answer is that both men are right.

They're both right because Ted is in all truth two entirely different people. Sometimes he's happy and sometimes he's blue. Like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, one day he's charming, the next day he's mean. And like the little girl who had a little curl right in the middle of her forehead, when he is good he is very, very good, and when he is bad, he is horrid.

Believe me, a practicing psychiatrist would have a field day probing into the subconscious of Ted Williams. The Kid, who, as Milton Gross once wrote, has done everything in baseball but grow up, is the victim of an oppressing sense of insecurity, a terrific inferiority complex, and a basic distrust of his fellow men.

All of which is undoubtedly an outgrowth of his unhappy, insecure childhood. Ted Williams is, as any working sportswriter will tell you, one of the hardest guys in the business to interview no matter what you want to talk to him about. But if you try to get him to tell you anything about his background, that's when he'll clam up on you for keeps. Which, when you think it over, is interesting in itself.

Ted's mother, Mrs. May Williams, is an ardent Salvation Army worker in San Diego. Up and down the Southern California coast she's known as "Salvation May," "The Sweetheart of San Diego," and "The Angel of Tia Juana." As single-minded about her religious work as her famous son is about his hitting, she is proud of her reputation for being able to force her way into any kind of an establishment in behalf of the Salvation Army, and she has laid claim to the world record for selling the Salvation Army newspaper, *War Cry*.

I didn't get a chance to go to San Diego to see her, but my friend and colleague Hannibal Coons took care of that detail and came up with some interesting information.

"Mrs. Williams is extremely friendly and pleasant to everyone," he reports, "but by now she is a little hipped on the Salvation Army, and if you so much as say hello she will gladly leap aboard the conversation and talk both your legs off about the Salvation Army and its glories."

May Williams not only satisfied her spiritual desires through her Salvation Army work, but also used it to earn a living for herself and her two boys. That was a little detail that apparently didn't always appeal to Ted's father.

Sam Williams, a confirmed wanderer to whom a house was a prison, played virtually no part in the little family's life. He and his wife have been separated for nine years and are now officially divorced. Sam is in the photography business in San Francisco and is very proud of his boy Ted. He sticks his chest out every time he hears of some new exploit by The Kid.

A corps cadet as a little girl, Mrs. Williams has been in the Salvation

Army for 44 years. She graduated from the Salvation Army Training College in Chicago in 1910, and spent three years on duty in Honolulu, where she met her future husband. Later, she was assigned successively to San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Barbara, and San Diego.

Mrs. Williams was an officer in the Salvation Army for years. She is now an Envoy—a non-com, something like a sergeant. She told Coons, "When I didn't marry an officer in the Army, I lost my rank."

Playing the cornet in the Salvation Army band, and occasionally picking up extra money by entertaining prisoners in nearby jails, May Williams took care of her growing boys. But the haphazard conditions of their life must have made an indelible impression upon young Teddy's character. It doesn't take a psychiatrist to see the effects of those impressions in the person that Ted has become.

"Ted is a wonderful son," Mrs. Williams said. "He's never given me a moment's worry, and he's been a wonderful provider. He loves baseball just like I love my Salvation Army work."

When he was a small boy, his mother used to give Ted 30 cents a day to buy his lunch. One day the school nurse called her and asked what arrangements Mrs. Williams was making for Ted's lunch. The nurse explained her concern by adding that the boy never seemed to go near the school cafeteria and was obviously losing weight.

Mrs. Williams investigated and found that Ted was giving away his daily 30 cents to other kids who had no lunch money. He was going without lunch himself. This action didn't especially surprise his Mom, who says: "Ted is very generous and always has been."

Mrs. Williams didn't have as much luck with her other son, Danny. With their mother so busy, both Ted and Danny were pretty much on their own. Ted went whole-hog for baseball, while Danny proceeded to drift into difficulties.

There's no question that Ted has been exceedingly generous to his mother, even though he seldom goes to see her. He has sent her sizable sums of money ever since he started making it. A few years ago he had the old family home on Utah Street in San Diego completely remodeled for her. She knows what she's talking about when she tells you he has always been a good boy.

"Don't say anything about Teddy except the highest and the best," she told Coons. "He's a wonderful son." And as Hannibal says, "You can't beat that!"

When Ted was a little boy, he was "dedicated" to the Salvation Army by Commissioner Estill of San Diego. It didn't take. As soon as Ted discovered that the Army had no baseball team, he was through with it.

Ted's mother made no objection when he began playing ball at an early age. She didn't even object when he plastered the house with pictures of Babe Ruth, who is probably still Ted's Number One idol. The

first time she put up a kick was when Ted told her the Texas Liquor House in San Diego wanted to pay him two dollars a game to play on its team. May Williams wouldn't stand for that at all. "I'll sweep the streets first," she said, indignantly.

But by and large she was very tolerant of his all-out attachment to the game. In fact, as he grew a little older, Mrs. Williams took an active interest in his baseball career. Her demand for a \$1,000 bonus for signing caused Bill Essick of the Yankee scouting staff to drop Ted like a hot potato. And when, at 17, he was signed by the San Diego club, she made the owner of the club—Uncle Bill Lane—promise not only that he wouldn't sell Ted until he was 21 but also that he'd give her a piece of the purchase price when he did.

Uncle Bill apparently forgot both promises. He peddled Theodore to the Red Sox in the middle of his second semester with the Padres, and he neglected to cut in Mrs. Williams. A big rhubarb resulted, and Mrs. Williams went all the way to Eddie Collins, the vice-president of the Red Sox, with her complaint. The word around the baseball circuit is that she came away from that interview richer by \$2,500.

So many things become clearer to you when you weigh all this information about Ted's background. You can understand, for instance, why he is so eager to make big money. There never was any money around the Williams house and there must have been times when the lack of it was a constant worry. Every time he endorses a fat pay check, Ted becomes that much bigger in his own eyes. He justifies himself that much more.

Knowing the kind of mold that shaped him, it's difficult to dismiss Ted's tantrums as the actions of an unmitigated jerk. He isn't a jerk. He's a badly mixed-up young man who is just beginning to get his bearings and is trying hard to draw up on even terms with his inferiority complex. You've got to keep in mind that a guy who feels inferior will often attempt to make up for this by doing things that make people complain: "Who does that guy think he is?" In other words, he tries to cover his burning sense of inferiority with a veneer of superiority. It's a hard thing to get away with and Ted is no master at it.

Now that we know something about the origins of this young man with a bat, and a bit about what different people think of him, let's shift our spotlight to Williams himself.

Ted's a fiend for exercising. He does pushups almost every day, though he laughs off the stories that he does 50 every morning. "I wouldn't be able to swing a bat if I did," he says. He gets plenty of sleep, being no part of a night hawk, and he eats enough to feed two ordinary men.

He's always buying new exercise gadgets that strike his fancy, especially ones that he thinks might strengthen his wrists and his forearms.

That's where he generates the power that sends the ball screaming over the fence—and he's always in the market for more power.

The stories you've read about the way he's always practicing his swing are largely true. He'll stand for an hour in front of a hotel-room mirror swinging a bat, and any bystanders are strictly on their own. Once he misjudged his distance and crashed his bat into the bed, wrecking it with one stroke. Broadway Charlie Wagner, who was rooming with him, dropped to the floor in the middle of the debris. Ted stood with the bat in his hand, looking at the unhappy Wagner in the ruined bed. And all he said was: "Gee, what power!"

Ted likes to read but he'll never make the Book-of-the-Month Club happy. His taste runs to hunting and fishing magazines and sports publications. He may look at a comic book or two on the side, but it's the sports stuff he goes for mostly. Newspapers, too. He reads the papers religiously, although it probably would be better for his disposition if he didn't. He agrees with the writers about as often as Stalin agrees with Churchill.

Except for baseball, the Red Sox slugger has only one sports passion, and that's hunting and fishing. Give him a new gun or a new reel, and he's the happiest guy in the world. He's an absolute nut about the two outdoor sports. And good, too. Competent observers have said he is one of the finest fly-casters, if not the finest, in the United States.

When it comes to being entertained, he'll settle for the movies. He's crazy about Wild West pictures, but will compromise on a good, bloody murder picture. As long as it's got plenty of gun-fighting, Ted will say it's okay.

Ranking right along with his passion for the movies, but not as frequently indulged in, is Ted's love for prize fights. His wife, Doris, shares this enthusiasm with him, as she does his delight in hunting and fishing. The Williamsses rarely miss a good—or even mediocre—fight.

When it comes to money, as to so many other things, Ted is a strange guy. He'll break your arm before he'll let you pick up a check, but he'll endorse anything or participate in any kind of a stunt to make a fast buck. When I first went to work on this story, I was warned by the Boston front office that Ted might demand a fee for being interviewed. He doesn't miss any bets. Fred Corcoran, his business agent, gets paid to hustle extra-curricular fees for him.

But if Ted is an eager beaver when it comes to making money, he has few peers in the technique of spending it. He tips lavishly and he stubbornly refuses to let anybody in his company pay for anything. If you insist, you're in for trouble, because Ted's method of settling such an argument is to wrestle you for it.

As far as his baseball pay is concerned, the best guess seems to be that Ted wants to get his hooks on the biggest pay check in baseball history

not only because he's hungry for the cash, but because he's hungry for the prestige such an arrangement would carry for him. He wants, more than anything else, to be known as the top hitter of all time. Quite logically, he figures that if he can pull down the biggest salary of all time, he'll have made his point.

Except for the tantrums he directs at the fans and at himself, nobody can say Ted is a bad actor on the playing field. He never bothers the umpires and he never gets belligerent toward the guys on the other team. Nobody at Boston can ever recall seeing Ted in a rhubarb with an umpire—and there are very few players who can make that statement.

Ted never wears a hat or a necktie.

The one thing he didn't like about his service in the Marine Corps was the regulation that forced him to wear a field scarf. "Field scarf, hell!" he still complains. "As far as I was concerned, it was just another goddam tie!"

Williams has no permanent home. He lives most anywhere the fishing is good. He hasn't bought or built a house yet, and if he has any ideas in that direction, he hasn't told anybody about them. During the season, he rents an apartment or a small house in Boston, picking it off the listings kept on file in the Red Sox office.

Ted has few business interests outside baseball. Some people in Boston tried to interest him in an automobile agency, but he turned the proposition down. "I'd rather go off some place and fish when the season's over," he told them. He does, however, have a financial interest in a Howard Johnson restaurant.

Nobody ever has heard Ted speak of any baseball ambitions extending beyond his playing days. It's unlikely that he'd have the patience to take on a coaching or managing job.

Ted's reluctance to make public appearances is well known but a lot of people don't know that he's a wonderful after-dinner speaker if you can get him to do it. He has a ready wit and a gift for repartee that enables him to hold his own with the best professional speech-makers. But he hates it, hates it like poison, so it's a rare occasion when he sits down at a banquet table.

He's a rapid-fire talker when you have him off by himself. Especially if he's not just making polite conversation, but is really interested in the subject being discussed. Get him talking about hunting or fishing, or batting, and he bubbles over with excitement. He tries to tell you six things at once and his personality is at its effervescent best.

A swing music fan, Ted has no use for the quiet tunes that are generally piped into Fenway Park the afternoon of a ball game. "Geez, that stinks!" he'll complain loudly.

Ted's idea of a wonderful way to spend a rainy day in Boston is to hustle down to the Police Department range and shoot at targets for

hours. The cops love him. They've always got a gun and a flock of bullets for him—and that's not a crack.

When you look at him, or study a picture of him, there doesn't seem to be anything especially unusual about Ted Williams' ears. They don't stick out from his head at right angles like Ewell Blackwell's do. They aren't mashed to pulp like a punchdrunk prizefighter's. On the contrary, they're a good-looking pair of ears. They fit close to his handsome head and they go well with his regular features.

But the fact remains that they are highly unusual ears. They're the most sensitive organs of hearing baseball has known in recent history. To put it in the language of the dugout, they're "rabbit ears." Each one is equipped with a natural radar set that makes it possible for Ted to pick a single raspberry out of a booming roar of approving cheers.

Young Mr. Williams is an artist in this department. Standing in deep left field, he can hear a mildly sarcastic comment originating in the last row of the grandstand on a cloudy day. And what he does when his sensitive ears tune in on the wavelength of the booing fan is a caution. No man alive can guess what form his savage counterattack will take. It's a good bet, though, that the counterattack will come.

The consuming passion of this young man's life is hitting, and that means he has apprenticed himself to a tough trade, one that imposes harsh restrictions on him. It has made him a perfectionist, like Bix Beiderbecke was with trumpeting, or Bobby Jones with golf.

Ted not only dislikes himself when his hitting falls off—he's positively intolerant of himself. It's this ingrained compulsion to be the best man at his trade in the world that has made him such an irascible character. When the homers aren't rattling off his mace, he can't stand anyone—including himself. When a fan barks a querulous jibe at such a time, Williams is goaded into turning on his tormentor with a spitting, scathing stream of searing profanity that would burn the ears off a mule-skinner.

When he's hitting, it's a different story. Then he's the picture of the complacent artisan, the satisfied workman who has just finished a good day's work and is ready, even eager, to accept compliments from all hands.

There is nothing malicious, I am sure, about the occasional princely rages he directs at jeering fans. They are, rather, wholly defensive in character, another product of that whopping inferiority complex.

Ted made his first ripple in the baseball world back in 1935 when, as a 16-year-old pitcher-outfielder at Herbert Hoover High School in San Diego, he murdered opposition pitching for a sensational .586 batting average.

According to people who ought to know, it was right at this time that the New York Yankees muffed a chance to wrap him up in cellophane

for future delivery. One of Ted's buddies, a fireman named Elmer Hill, is reported to have touted the kid slugger to Bill Essick, who makes his living hunting ivory for the Yanks. Essick was interested in young Ted, but he lost interest fast when he learned, as mentioned previously, that Ted's mother wanted a cash bonus of an even thousand bucks for signing. Essick didn't think the gangling youngster was worth that kind of dough.

This is strictly hindsight, and not meant as a slam at Essick's scouting talent, which is considerable, but it's a fact that a quarter of a million dollars wouldn't buy half of Ted Williams today.

Ted had a terrific slump in his 1936 high school season. He only hit a feeble .403! But even that anaemic mark was good enough to catch the eye of Bill Lane, who at that time owned the San Diego Padres of the Pacific Coast League. The Padres signed Williams to his first professional baseball contract.

Frank Shellenback, now a scout for the New York Giants, was managing the Padres at the time. Williams reported to him as a pitcher but Shellenback wasted no time switching the kid to the outfield. For one thing, Frank wanted to exploit Ted's batting power, and for another he was worried about the kid's health.

"I wanted him to have a long life," he says now, "and I knew he wouldn't have as a pitcher. The balls were going back to him a lot faster than he was serving them up."

The only time Williams has pitched since was one desperate afternoon in 1941 when the Red Sox mound staff had been exhausted by the Detroit Tigers, and Ted took over. In one inning, he fanned Pinky Higgins, made Hank Greenberg pop up, and struck out Rudy York. For weeks, he talked about nothing else.

There was no indication, in Ted's first season as a minor-leaguer (he finished out the '36 campaign in the uniform of the San Diego club), that he was going to grow up into the most feared slugger since Ruth. Ted hit .271, including exactly no home runs. But there was something about the way he leaned into the ball, something about his nonchalance on the firing line, that made you look twice at him.

Certainly Eddie Collins, then the general manager of the Red Sox, looked twice. And again, and still again. Collins finally grabbed Williams after he finished the 1937 season with the Padres. That year, his first full season as a pro, Ted belted 23 homers and hit a respectable .291. He hit his way right into the Boston organization.

It would make pleasant reading to say that the Red Sox rushed Ted straight to Fenway Park and that his bat rocketed home runs into the bleachers there with the consistency of an 81-millimeter mortar. But that didn't happen. Instead, the Sox took a look at Teddy in the Spring of 1938 and sent him to Minneapolis in the American Association.

Ted came of age as a hitter in Minneapolis. All the pitchers in the circuit—and the American Association is not known as an easy league—were cousins to Thumping Theodore. He walloped the ball at a merciless .366 clip and included 43 home runs in his production of hits. Not bad for a growing boy.

While he was playing for the Millers, he met Doris Soule, who lived in nearby Princeton, Minnesota. He married her in 1944.

Though his hitting was good in Minneapolis, his behavior was extremely bad for Manager Donie Bush's peace of mind. Ted had a habit of wandering around in the outfield taking imaginary swings with an imaginary bat that almost drove Bush nuts. He would be swinging away, and practicing his footwork, even while a fly ball was soaring toward him, which is a brand of outfielding difficult for the most broad-minded manager to endorse.

Bush sputtered with indignation one day when Ted belted a double, then took a short lead off second. The third-base coach hollered instructions to him, and Ted turned on the offending citizen angrily.

"Hey!" he yelled. "Shut up, willya? I got myself out here, and I'll get myself in again!"

But Teddy learned a lot in Minneapolis, enough to help him stick with the Red Sox when he reported for duty in the Spring of 1939.

His first season with the Red Sox didn't seem to be getting off to an especially good start when he was yanked from an exhibition game in Atlanta for throwing the ball into the stands after missing a foul catch. Joe Cronin didn't waste a second pulling him out of the lineup after that outburst, and the square-jawed Irishman from San Francisco pulled no punches explaining to the recruit that if he was going to play in the big leagues he'd have to learn to act like a big-leaguer.

Whether or not Ted ever has learned is open to question. But he hasn't been yanked from any ball games recently and his present manager, Joe McCarthy, isn't known for tolerating clowns or incompetents.

Although Ted had a good season with Boston in 1939, his first year up, he wasn't able to take the spotlight away from Foxx. The fading Jimmy, nearing the end of his career, walloped 35 home runs as he fashioned a batting average of .360. The kid from Minneapolis hit .327, chalked up 31 homers, and batted in the astounding total of 145 runs.

That was a reasonably happy year for Ted. Everybody liked him, despite his cocky attitude and his forthright manner of speech, and certainly everybody respected his ability. But the next season marked the beginning of his unpopularity. It was in 1940 that the fans began to ride him and he began to snarl at them like a caged lion. The relationship established that year hasn't changed materially since, though it has its high and its low points. Ted and the customers rarely enjoy any degree of intimacy beyond the status of an armed truce.

It was in 1940 that he first decided he wouldn't tip his cap to the crowd, and he has stuck to that decision.

If it weren't for his unfortunate actions, Ted would have been the hero of Boston in 1940. He hit a rousing .344 and smote 23 home runs, 14 triples, and 43 doubles. He drove in 113 runs. On all sides he was gaining recognition as one of the game's outstanding hitters, but in few quarters was he winning friends or influencing people.

The year 1941, of course, was a great one for The Thumper. That .406 batting average stands out in the record books like a beacon light, and you've got to admire the way Ted put it together. With a week to go, his average was .406, and since the Red Sox had no hope of changing their position in the race (they were second to the Yankees), Cronin offered to let him call it quits in order to protect his average. Ted refused instantly.

"If I'm a .400 hitter," he told his manager, "I'm a .400 hitter for a whole season, not for part of one."

For a while after that it looked as though he wasn't going to make it. His average slipped to .399, which is what it was on the last day of the season as the Red Sox went into a doubleheader with the Athletics at Philadelphia. There was no longer any interest in the American League pennant race that day but there was plenty of interest in Ted Williams' bid for immortality. Everybody waited to see if he could do it.

He did it—and then some. Ted collected four hits in five trips to the plate in the first game and got two out of three in the nightcap. That was a total of six hits in eight tries for the day, and it left his 1941 average at a spectacular .406. One of the hits, incidentally, was a booming homer, his 37th of the year.

Ted had another fine season in 1942, his last before entering the service. He hit .356, driving in 137 runs and showering the stands with 36 homers. (It's interesting to note that Williams invariably keeps his home-run production around the middle thirties.)

He was involved in a bit of a fuss that year when he applied for deferment from the draft on the grounds that he had to support his mother. His already widespread unpopularity caused a lot of people to mutter about him but the muttering died down when Ted enlisted in the Navy as an Aviation Cadet. Later, of course, he moved over to the Marines, for whom he flew an F4U. Ted holds the Marine Corps all-time gunnery record for firing at a towed sleeve, which is not surprising when you remember what an amazingly keen pair of eyes he possesses.

The Navy doctors who gave him his entrance examination said his eyes would occur only six times in 100,000 persons. American League pitchers will nod sagely at this information and tell you they knew it all the time.

While we're on the subject of Williams at the bat, they say around the

league that the only way to pitch to Ted, other than walking him, is to keep the ball well inside, on the handle of his bat. It's hard for him to get enough leverage to lift the ball into the stands if you watch your control and keep it well in there. But look out if you miss by so much as an inch. The ball will zoom past your ear like the Santa Fe's Super-Chief rocketing through New Mexico hell-bent for L.A.

Ted's fielding is a different story. His philosophy holds that fielding is a relatively unimportant art, so he refuses to knock himself out in pursuit of defensive distinction. He leaves that to the DiMaggio boys.

"They'll never get me out of the game running into a wall after a fly ball," he says. "I'll make a damn good try, but you can bet your sweet life I won't get killed. They don't pay off on fielding."

Despite this attitude, he's not as bad out there as he's sometimes painted—even if his favorite fielding pose is a disinterested slouch with his arms folded across his chest after the manner of a cigar-store Indian.

When Ted came back from the war and rejoined the Red Sox at Sarasota in the Spring of '46, he seemed to be happy and friendly. The sportswriters turned out barrels of material on "The New Ted Williams," and speculated about whether his marriage or his service experience should get the credit for his reformation.

Then things began to go wrong again. It's generally true that a Williams rampage has its beginnings in a frustrating event. Well, the big frustration of 1946 for Teddy was the Lou Boudreau Shift. It just about drove him out of his head. The shift came into being at Fenway Park on a hot day in July, 1946. Ted had enjoyed a spectacular first game in a scheduled doubleheader with Cleveland, powdering three home runs. Desperate for some means of stopping the Boston clouter, Lou Boudreau, the Indians' manager, tried overshifting his defensive lineup to the right. He hoped to rob Williams of a lot of infield hits that way—and he did.

He also gave Ted a new bone to worry over. Williams could have discouraged the shift idea that first day by the simple expedient of bunting down the unprotected third-base line, or slicing a hit into the wide-open spaces of left field. But he didn't. Instead, he got proud, and he slashed away furiously at the heavily populated right side of the diamond, trying to prove he could hit the ball into the stands. He's been trying to prove it ever since—and, of course, he has succeeded quite well. But the shift has hurt him just the same. Most experts agree that it robbed him of anywhere from 15 to 20 base-hits in 1947. And it bothers the daylights out of him, even though he hates to admit it.

Of course, when Williams is having a good day, there is no defense against him. It's illegal to put an outfielder in the right-field grandstand.

Ted did all right in '46 despite the handicap of the new shift. He hauled the Red Sox to the pennant on the wings of his .342 batting

average, his 123 runs-batted-in, and his 38 homers. He didn't win the batting championship, which went to Washington's suddenly-inspired first-baseman, Mickey Vernon. But he did everything that was expected of him, and more, until he hit the World Series. Then he went into the most woeful tailspin of his career. He couldn't hit the St. Louis Cardinal pitchers for beans, and he came out of the series the undisputed goat of the beaten favorites.

Some observers thought his sobering World Series experience would work a change in Ted's approach to the game, but no such change has been visible. He's the same old Ted. His batting average is about the same, his RBI total is about the same, his home-run production is about the same, and his disposition is exactly the same.

It's too bad it had to be that way, for Ted has the makings of a great American sports legend. He has created something of a legend already, but it's not a pleasant one. He had the opportunity to do much better. He has known some great days on the diamond, this stringbean who comes from California and plays in Boston. He has accomplished some feats that no amount of eccentricity will be able to erase from the literature of baseball.

There was, for instance, the day Ted broke the hearts of all National Leaguers in the 1941 All-Star game at Detroit. Leading by 5-3 with two out in the last of the ninth, the Nationals seemed to have the ball game all wrapped up. But they had forgotten about Ted Williams. With one magnificent poke, Terrible Ted changed everything.

You probably recall what happened. In that fateful ninth, Frankie Hayes was first up for the American League. He popped to Billy Herman at second. Kenny Keltner, the Cleveland third-baseman, batted for pitcher Edgar Smith and drove an infield hit to Eddie Miller at short. Joe Gordon singled to right and a walk to Cecil Travis filled the bases.

The stands were seething with excitement as Joe DiMaggio, the Yankee Clipper himself, strode to the plate with that purposeful, businesslike air. But DiMag didn't have a hit in his system. The best he could do was hit into a force play that pushed Keltner over the plate. As Travis went into second base he bothered Billy Herman just enough to make that marvelous second-sacker throw a little wide on the attempted double play. That was the National League's big mistake, for it brought up Ted Williams again.

Bill McKechnie, the wily NL manager, could have walked Williams. But Claude Passeau had struck him out in the eighth—and besides, Dom DiMaggio was up next, and that could hardly be regarded as a picnic. So McKechnie ordered Passeau to pitch to the Boston star.

Ted stood up there in that wiggly, waggly, way of his, fidgeting and stretching and squirming. You could hear the people in the stands talking. "Loose as a goose up there, ain't he?"

With the count two balls and one strike, the mighty man swung. He kissed the ball with the fat part of his bat and that was all. Into the right-field stands whistled the tiny pellet, and the ball game was over. Grinning and dancing happily, The Kid circled the bases behind Gordon and DiMaggio and dented the plate to make the score 7-5 for his league.

It was a tough game for the National League to lose, but they learned the hard way what the boys in the other league have known for a long time—that the only way to get Ted Williams out is to hit him on the head with a blunt instrument.

Then there was the 1946 All-Star game, in which Ted took the gentlemen from the National League, stirred them up with a few pokes of his bat, and hung them out on the line to dry. It was plain murder, what he did that July 9 in his own ball park.

Principally because of the way Ted Williams swung his dynamite-laden bat, the National League went down that day to a humiliating 12-0 defeat in the annual mid-Summer classic. It was, by anybody's standards, a rout. And Williams was the chief router. (There isn't any such word, but in this case there ought to be.)

While Bob Feller, Hal Newhouser, and Jack Kramer were handcuffing the NL hitters with three stray singles, the AL power erupted like Mount Vesuvius. Williams went up to bat five times, and each time he got on base. He walked in the first inning, hit a home run in the fourth with nobody on, singled home a run in the fifth, singled off the great Ewell Blackwell in the seventh, and hit his famous homer off Rip Sewell's blooper in the eighth.

It's doubtful if any baseball crowd ever got more of a kick out of a hit than the Fenway Park throng got out of Ted's clout off Sewell in that game. Remember, it was no longer a contest at that stage. It was simply an exhibition. Without anything specific to root for, the fans loaned their affection to Williams and implored him to hit another homer.

When he teed off on Sewell's teaser, supplying all his own power to propel the ball into the seats, the crowd roared until it sank back exhausted. It was a great moment for Ted.

In any study of this amazing character, you've got to spend a little time on the Most Valuable Player situation. It's important to note that despite his fabulous batting feats, the Red Sox hero has won the MVP award in the American League only once. He was voted the honor in 1946 for his work in sparking the Sox to their first pennant in 28 years. The writers overlooked Ted's miserable World Series performance (he batted .200 against the Cardinals).

But in 1941, the year Williams blasted American League pitching for a .406 average, the first .400 mark in the majors since Bill Terry hit .401 for the Giants in 1930, he didn't get it. Joe DiMaggio did. That was the

season Joltin' Joe hung up his consecutive game batting streak of 56 in a row as he slugged the Yanks to the flag. The decision was received with an ominous quiet in Boston.

In 1947, it was almost like a replay of the '41 affair. Ted monopolized the slugging titles in his league, but Joe DiMaggio led the Yankees to another pennant. DiMaggio hit .315, and Williams hit .343. DiMag collected 20 home runs. Williams hit 32. DiMag drove in 97 runs. Williams batted in 114. But when the writers filled out their ballot slips, DiMaggio was named the Most Valuable Player by a one-vote margin over Ted.

What does this mean? In Boston they'll tell you it means nothing except that "those goddam prejudiced New York sportswriters are at it again." The 1947 MVP announcement got a different reception from the 1941 result. That time there was stunned silence. This time there was an anguished outcry. "We was robbed!" the Red Sox shouted, as they staggered from the blow.

The truth of the matter is, of course, that the small group of New York City sportswriters participating in the poll cannot possibly wield enough influence to swing the election to their candidate. Williams was defeated because a great many conscientious sportswriters do not consider him the Most Valuable Player in any league. The chances are good they wouldn't consider him such if he hit twice as many home runs. They think he's a poor team man who cares only for his own batting marks and nothing for the success of the unit.

There wasn't any argument after the 1948 season. Lou Boudreau, the great shortstop-manager of the pennant-winning Indians, won the MVP despite the fact that Ted once again won the batting championship of the American League, this time with a sparkling .369 average.

This is for sure. No matter how complicated are the wheels that go around inside Ted Williams' head, no matter how many rhubarbs he stirs up either on or off the field, he is still the greatest batsman of his time. With that Louisville Slugger in his mitts, Ted is absolutely the best.

There are few players who can equal the impression of controlled violence that you see in Ted Williams as he steps up to the plate.

He's as loose as ashes up there, wiggling his bat incessantly, swinging his arms, fidgeting this way and that. The wiry grace of his body carries an explosive air. You sit in your seat and you begin to tingle. It's something like the feeling you get when the bathrobes come off the two antagonists just before a heavyweight championship fight. It's a feeling anyone who ever saw Babe Ruth bat will remember clearly. Something is going to happen . . . you can feel it . . . you wait for it . . . and when Ted leans into the ball, the swish and the smash remind you of the lash of a giant bull whip.

It's an indescribable relief when you know he's hit the ball . . . You wanted him to hit it badly, and you half-rise out of your seat when you see the ball fly off the fat of his bat, soar into the blue sky like a homesick star, and dip purposefully into the stands.

The deep roar that accompanies a Ted Williams home run comes from the pit of the fans' stomachs, and you don't have to be an amateur psychologist to guess that his blast has made them a little bigger in their own eyes. It's as though the crash of his mighty bat made them feel they had managed to belt savagely all the obstacles and troubles in the world.

Many people have compared Ted Williams to Babe Ruth, on two counts. They claim he hits like the mighty Bambino, and he has the same colorful temperament.

That's a swing and a miss. Williams may grow up to be a hitter of Ruthian proportions, but he's got a heap of growing to do first. The Boston thumper is a whale of a man with that bat but, good as he is, he has yet to prove he belongs in the same class with Ruth.

As a person, Ruth was a man of huge appetites, a man who ate and drank like Gargantua, out-playboyed Tommy Manville, and rode through life on a cloud of casual good humour that left no room for thoughts of a serious nature. Williams, on the other hand, trains religiously, never lets himself pick up excess weight, carefully respects his eyes and his wind, and gets plenty of sleep. He's no girl-chaser, no lover of night clubs, no devourer of hot dogs by the dozen. His claim to the rating of "character" is based on one trait—his petulance.

Petulant is a word that means sulky, bad-tempered, irritable, huffy, fretful, moody, peevish, cross. All those words fit Ted Williams. Because he owns these unenviable qualities, Williams has enlivened his baseball career (but not enhanced it) by a bewildering array of incidents that have made him look like nothing so much as a small boy who gets sore when things don't go exactly his way. He's the archetype of the kid who has to be treated with kid gloves because he's liable to get mad at the gang, pick up his marbles, and run home.

That's not the kind of ballplayer Babe Ruth was. It is, unfortunately, the kind of player Ted Williams is—or, at any rate, has been until now. When and if Ted grows up, the chances are good his ability will improve side by side with his character.

But that's pure speculation. You never know what the guy is likely to do next. Even the Williams-hardened people in the Red Sox front office were slightly surprised to see him take up a position in the boxes behind first base one day a few years ago and calmly point a shiny new pistol at the scoreboard in left field. Shooting deliberately, Ted proceeded to shatter some \$400 worth of electric light bulbs!

I ask you, what the hell are you going to do with a guy like that? Especially when he's a couple of guys.

JACK DEMPSEY

Fighter from Manassa

By Jack Sher

FROM July 4, 1919, to September 23, 1926—from a day in Toledo under a merciless, broiling sun to a night at Philadelphia in a soggy, rain-drenched ring—there reigned a fighting champion the world will never forget. They called him, "Jack the Giant Killer," and "The Manassa Mauler." He was called a hero, a wonderful guy, and he was called a bum, and worse.

Jack Dempsey was the most loved and most hated prizefighter the ring has ever known, at once the most popular heavyweight champion of the world and the most despised. For a time, he was God's most misunderstood and unhappy man, yet he fought his way out of the mist to become one of the most respected and successful figures of his era. Dempsey was a man who had to fight all his life. He was made for it. The word *fight* belongs to Jack Dempsey. It is synonymous with his name.

As a boy, bum, man, and gentleman, there has never been a fighter with the color of Dempsey, of such heroic proportions, living a life so touched with spirit, excitement, tragedy, and drama. Out of the ring a kind, human, warm-hearted man, inside the ropes no one could be as rough-and-tumble, so much of a killer, so cruel, so much an animal, as Dempsey.

The Dempsey scowl, the hate in the flat-black eyes, the murder in his brine-hardened fists, struck terror into the men he faced. But, as the years rolled on, the fighters he had battered into bloody hulks became his friends. They came to him for jobs, to talk over old times, or just to shake his hand.

Few realize what the kid from Manassa did for the fight game. He took it out of the smoky back rooms and dance halls, the barns, pool halls, and bars. His fists built the million-dollar gates, the huge arenas, the nationwide broadcasts. He changed the game and changed himself. Today little remains of the Dempsey of the early 1900's, the bearded, cinder-covered, poverty-roughened "bo" riding the blind baggage from

town to town, getting beat up and dishing it out in Western tank towns to earn enough for a meal and a flop.

In the face of today's Dempsey, the restlessness is gone. Only a few scars are still there to tell you what he once was. His manner is friendly, his life easy. His bashed-in nose has been lifted. He's learned the manners of gentlemen. He's learned the ways of business and respectability. Only occasionally does the spirit of the old Dempsey flash through the veneer as his face comes alive with the old toughness, the competitive fire that made him so murderous in the ring.

It was a bitter and beautiful time for Jack Dempsey. It was a time filled with pain and hunger, and joy and extreme hardship. Nobody can talk about it the way Dempsey can, because nobody misses it so much. Of all the people who told me stories about Jack Dempsey—the friends, trainers, sparring mates—none of them related the incidents about the Manassa Mauler as vividly as Dempsey himself.

On a Saturday afternoon we sat in the back of Jack's glittering restaurant on Broadway. The noon rush hour was over. The place was almost quiet. Three of us sat around a table. Dempsey, his body too big for his chair, chewed on an unlit cigar. Al Buck, his friend and adviser, toyed with a pair of eggs. A few people drifted over to get Dempsey's autograph. A woman came over and Jack got up and shook her hand.

"You don't remember me, Jack," she said. "It was a long time ago. I was twenty-six."

"You don't look much older than that now," Dempsey said, with a smile.

A friend from the West came over after she left. The friend looked at Jack the way a ten-year-old looks at a hero.

"You look good, Jack," he said. "Bet you could still fight."

"No, pal," Jack said. "I couldn't."

When the friend went away, Dempsey turned to us. There was a certain sadness in his eyes. "Still fight?" he said. "I lost that a long time ago, long before most people knew I had lost it. But I knew it. I knew it before that Tunney fight. I had started to think then. *Think*," he said, underlining the word with his voice. "That's something a fighter should never do. The smarter you get, the less you can fight."

Then he began to talk about the past, recalling old names, old towns, fights, struggles, the way it was when a tough kid named Dempsey had nothing in the world but a dream and a punch. He did not speak his thoughts in any sort of order—he jumped back and forth over the years—but all he said had in it the color and lustiness of raw life. After a while, it got so that you could see the old roads and hills of the West, the wind-beaten, clapboard houses, the tough dives, the freights hurtling through the night, the sawdust rings with the clothesline ropes. You could smell the sweat and liniment and taste the blood-soaked gloves.

"Whenever I went into the ring then," Dempsey was saying, "I felt like the toughest guy in the world. The scowl? I never felt I had it. I didn't feel anything. Too keyed up. I just wanted to get that guy in front of me. Belt the hell out of him, before he'd belt the hell out of me. No, I didn't think much then. That's why I had coordination of mind and body. It was a natural instinct. A fighter shouldn't think. Just fight. I was good, then. But how many saw those fights? The real fights, the ones where I got a few lousy bucks, the hardest and best fights."

Dempsey never had a "boxing match" with anyone in his life. It was always a fight. He began talking about one of the fights, one of the toughest. It was a fight he won over a roughneck puncher named Johnny Sudenberg in Goldfield, Nevada, in 1915. Dempsey was 23 years old then, not fully grown, weighing 165 pounds. He had been hopping freights, working in mines, traveling all over Utah, Colorado, Nevada, trying to get into the ring against anyone who would fight him.

Sudenberg was a heavyweight, one of the most rugged and skillful the mining country had ever produced. Dempsey went up against him as a substitute for a fighter who had backed out. The promoters were worried, because Jack looked too small and seemed too green as a fighter. But Dempsey talked them into it.

He trained in a dive called the Northern Bar. His first sparring partner was a rough Indian pug named Kid Harrison. Dempsey, never easy on spar-mates, knocked Harrison stiff one day and lost him. He took on another boy named Roy Moore. This one managed to stay on his feet during the training. Before the bout, Moore, who had seen Sudenberg fight, advised Dempsey not to start slugging it out with his opponent.

That went against Dempsey's grain. He knew how to do only one thing, go in there and slug. The fight was held in the town dancehall. For three rounds, the two men stood toe to toe and tried to kill each other with punches. The place was a madhouse of screaming miners and farmers. They had never seen anything like it.

"Johnny could hit," Dempsey said. "From the fifth round on, I had no idea what was happening. Sometimes there was a face in front of me. Sometimes there was nothing. I just kept throwing my fists."

The fight went 10 rounds. Dempsey was on his feet when the bell rang, but for hours afterwards he didn't know whether he had won or been knocked out. The fight went to Dempsey on a decision. Dempsey dragged his battered body and welted, shapeless face to a shack outside of town where he slept. When he woke up the next morning, he discovered that his manager had skipped off with the \$100 Dempsey was to get for the fight. He was flat broke.

The beaten-up kid fighter hung around town for a few days. Then a wire came from a promoter in Tonopah, Nevada, 30 miles away. Would Dempsey fight Johnny Sudenberg again? Dempsey's answer was to start

for Tonopah, walking. It was a walk over the mountains. He legged it 15 miles before he was picked up by a wagon. And 10 days later, his face and body still swollen and bruised, Young Dempsey, as he was then known, climbed into the ring again against Sudenberg.

The second Dempsey-Sudenberg fight was rougher than the first. In the first round, Dempsey floored Sudenberg seven times. Each time, Johnny bounced back and crashed into Dempsey. Round after round wore on. One of the fighters had to retreat. It was Sudenberg. He began to back up, but as he went back, he kept belting away and gaining strength. Dempsey, not used to fighting in high altitudes, began to weaken. In the seventh round, Sudenberg brought up a right from the floor and knocked Dempsey flat on his back. Jack got up. Sudenberg knocked him down again. Dempsey took three knockdowns in that round, but kept on boring in for more.

The crowd watching that fight was as exhausted as the fighters. By the last round, with the two men still slugging at each other, they watched in silent, breathless awe. They had seen the greatest prizefight of their lives, probably one of the most brutal of all time. It was called a draw. Dempsey pulled himself across the ring at the final bell, put his arm around Johnny Sudenberg's shoulders. They left the ring that way, supporting each other.

"He was a fighter," Dempsey said. "I really liked that guy."

After the fight with Sudenberg, Dempsey was broke. His best friend in the world at that time was the man he had just fought. Sudenberg and Dempsey scraped up enough money to buy a pair of train tickets to Reno. At Nina Junction, they staged another fight, a four-round affair, to get enough money to continue. They passed the hat and took in four dollars and split it up and shook hands and when they finally parted they were the best of friends.

Few fighters ever fought so fiercely, or smoldered with such a deep desire to annihilate an opponent, as Dempsey. But, once it was over, Dempsey never had the slightest feeling of dislike for the man he had tried to kill in the ring. In Toledo, to win the title, Jack cut big Jess Willard to ribbons, slashed the left side of his face open to the bone in 13 places. It was as ruthless and brutal a beating as any man has ever taken in the ring. But, today, Willard is one of Dempsey's friends, and Jack gave him jobs on two occasions.

Dempsey likes to tell about the time he hired Jess to make the rounds of bars in Miami and plug a liquor bearing the trade mark *Jack Dempsey's Rye*. Willard would go into a bar, ask in a loud voice how Jack Dempsey's Rye was going, then order a drink of it for everyone. "Some of Dempsey's Rye for everyone," Jess would say, "and make mine a scotch and soda."

Fans will never forget the Wild Bull of the Pampas, Luis Angel

Firpo, the huge giant who smashed Dempsey clean out of the ring that September night in 1923 at the Polo Grounds. It was the most primitive, savage title fight ever seen, eclipsing even the Willard massacre. In the first round, Dempsey knocked the giant Firpo down seven times. Then, in a frenzied, maddened rush, the Argentinian crashed into Dempsey with fists flying, and the champion sailed through the ropes, landing on newspapermen and breaking a typewriter to pieces.

"Between the rounds," Dempsey said, "Jerry the Greek pushed smelling salts under my nose. I felt as though I had been fighting for hours. I thought I had struck thousands of blows and been hit as many times. I asked Doc Kearns what round it was. When he said it was the first round, I couldn't believe him."

Nobody is more honest about the things that happened in his fights than Jack Dempsey. For years, a hot debate swirled around the issue of whether Dempsey was pushed out of the ring by Firpo or knocked out. "He must have cracked me good," Jack will tell you. "I didn't know what hit me. I was groggy." And did the newspapermen help Dempsey back into the ring? "I don't remember whether they did or not," Dempsey said. "They probably did. Damned if I know. I just know I was fighting in a fog, instinctively."

Dempsey ended Firpo's fighting career. But, even today, more than a quarter-century after the fight, Dempsey and Luis Angel Firpo still write letters to each other. Recently Firpo sent Dempsey a South American fighter whom he thought Jack might help. And Jack Sharkey, that surly, slugging gob who was so bitter about his KO by Dempsey's fists, still drops in to see him.

"Sharkey still wants to fight Jack," Al Buck grinned. "He still thinks he can lick him." In that charming way he has, Dempsey always cons him out of it, telling him that nobody wants to see a couple of old men fight. And a few years ago, he got Sharkey some work as a ref in the Southwest, in territory he'd once toured himself.

This is not an attempt to make Dempsey seem like an angel among men. He wasn't. He was a man like the Western country that raised him, wide-open, roughneck, cruel, generous, wild, and mean. In his fighting days, Jack had none of the civilized charm he has since worked so hard to attain.

Dempsey's old fight camps, the ones at Toledo, Shelby, and Saratoga Springs, were the most colorful, bawdy, brawling, and exciting places in the history of the ring. They were jam-packed with the people Dempsey loved, the broken-down pugs, the breezy dames, the prank-minded sportswriters, the sharp-eyed managers, the battered sparring partners, the friends and hangers-on, the old pals from the West. They tore the place apart. Fights without gloves were common. They drank and swore and swirled around their hero, Jack Dempsey, the toughest of them all.

That was the day of Dempsey and Kearns. The Doc, as Jack called him, the wise-cracking, smart, flashily dressed man, the ex-pug gone dandy, the only one who could handle the Killer of the Ring. Dempsey and the old ballyhoo king were loyal, fine friends then. Kearns' mouth and brains, and the Manassa Mauler's courage and punch, had brought them a championship. They were the world's most typical fighter-and-manager combination. They were more romantic than fiction. They were in the tradition of H. C. Witwer's famous fiction hero, Kid Roberts, and his boss-man.

Even with the cracked-in, wrinkled nose, Dempsey looked like a movie version of a champion of the world. He had a beautiful build, wide, magnificently bronzed shoulders, strong neck, narrow waist, legs as slim and fast-moving as a dancer's, bright, glittering black eyes and blue-black, short-cropped, curly hair. But he cared little about how he looked. He didn't worry about preserving his face and body, and that added to his glamor. He went into a ring to kill or be killed.

Dempsey's only real problem in those days was getting sparring partners. Farmer Lodge, that huge hulk of a man, became a sort of hero on the basis of the fact that he stayed with Dempsey as a spar-mate so long, and took such a merciless amount of punishment. Dempsey was cruel beyond reason toward the men with whom he trained. He expected them to be the same way. Sparring with his friend, Gus Wilson, he hit him so hard that Gus went to a hospital to have a damaged kidney removed. Jimmy DeForest, one of Dempsey's best trainers, tells how Jack smashed a sparring partner named Jim Johnson so hard that the fighter crashed into a ring-post and broke it completely in half.

Dempsey was all business in the ring. He hated anyone who took it easy or clowned. Training for the second Gunboat Smith go, Jack sparred one day with a fighter named Clay Turner. The boxer got too fancy and playful, danced beyond and behind Dempsey, and tapped him playfully on the back of the head. It was just a fun-loving happy gesture. Seconds later, Turner was on the floor spitting blood, with three of his teeth on the canvas.

There never was anything like those old fight camps, but they changed after Dempsey married Estelle Taylor. Dempsey probably loved this beautiful, dark-haired woman more than anyone else in his life. And Estelle loved Jack Dempsey. It was a tempestuous, stormy, picture-book romance, filled with jealousies and tragedy and, often, high humor. They were introduced by the movie-director, Mervyn LeRoy, in Hollywood, where Jack had gone to make a picture. They fell in love instantly. The match was strongly opposed by Doc Kearns, perhaps for sound reasons, perhaps not. But it was the beginning of the end of the Kearns-Dempsey partnership. Estelle's motion-picture friends and acquaintances were as down on the marriage as those in Dempsey's camp.

"Estelle," a famous producer told her, "you'll be through in pictures, if you marry that pug."

"I'm not marrying a pug," Estelle flashed back. "I'm marrying a champion."

They were married. They toured Europe. The rough fighter discarded the tattered sweaters, gave up the hard, ugly ways that had made him so tough. He wore silk underwear and fine suits and attended dinners. He watched his table manners. He even met the Prince of Wales. He was feted, pampered, fawned upon. The cold, fighting fury was still in him, but it was no longer so close to the surface.

The fighter and the lady lived at the Ritz, in all the fabulous party-style and luxurious ease of the fabulous 20's. It was the way Estelle wanted to live, the way she always had lived. Dempsey liked it, but he was never at home in it. He never got bitter about what he enjoyed, although it quite possibly took the championship of the world away from him.

Estelle Taylor may not have known what changing Dempsey would do to him as a fighter. But she had forebodings before the first fight with Tunney. Sitting in the lavish surroundings of their Ritz suite one afternoon in 1926, she said to a close friend, a woman writer, "They think he has to sleep in a flop-house bed to be a fighter. They think he has to be tough all of the time." And then she added, a little sadly and with unconscious clairvoyance, "Perhaps he does, at that."

Estelle always felt worse about Dempsey's losing the title to Gene Tunney than Jack did himself. When he came back to her on the night of September 23, 1926, came into the room followed by friends and reporters, there were tears in her eyes when she saw his bruised, cut, and battered face. She held him closely, and touched the sore spots, and said, "What happened, Dempsey?"

Jack struggled to get one of his eyes open. He grinned down at her with a swollen, raw, pulpy face. "I forgot to duck, honey!"

Those in the room that night swallowed hard—and loved Jack Dempsey more than they ever had before. Those words, spoken without rancor and with great, good honesty, made him a champion more than his fists had the day he beat the giant at Toledo. He had fought hard. He had lost to Tunney fairly, and he was above bitterness or hate. Those things were for the ring. The after-battle alibi was not in his code.

After that, Jack Dempsey was mobbed wherever he went. He became the most popular ex-champion the ring had ever known. One night, a few months after the Tunney fight, Jack, Estelle, and a friend were sitting in the Silver Slipper, a popular Broadway nightclub. For hours he was surrounded by friends and admirers. They brought him gifts, shook his hands. Dempsey was touched. For years he had been subjected to vitriolic abuse. Now, no longer champ, he was adored.

"When he was up," Estelle Taylor said softly to the friend at the table, "they couldn't tear him down fast enough. Now that he's down, they can't do enough for him."

Dempsey and his lovely wife split up. They were torn apart by scandal, by fast living, or, perhaps, because they were too raw and fiery, too much filled with jealousy and emotion toward each other. The bridge between their two worlds was never quite completed. They broke up innumerable times, got together again, finally divorced and then, as the years went on, became good friends.

Even Kearns, who had hounded and abused Dempsey after the break in their partnership, was forgiven. Kearns, who had dogged him with process servers while Jack was getting ready for the Tunney fight, the old pal who took away his belongings, forced his wife to get out of a car on the highway, and took that too. He was forgiven all this. It wasn't in Dempsey's nature to go on hating Doc Kearns. They had fought too many good fights together. Old grudges made Dempsey restless. It was better and cleaner to slap a man on the back and say, "Let's forget about it, old pardner." So Kearns, too, became a friend once more.

There is a story Dempsey loves to tell about a time when he was stony broke in Kansas City. He had been working as a sparring partner for a great ox of a fighter named Carl Morris, readying him for a fight with Frank Moran. The fight was called off and Dempsey hung around Kansas City until he was down to his last eleven cents.

"I was really busted, pal," Dempsey says. "But there was a promoter in town, and I figured maybe he could get me a fight. I knew where he ate and I also figured that I would come up on him at chow time. If he couldn't get me a fight maybe he might invite me to join him in a bite."

But Dempsey arrived at the restaurant, the best in town, as the promoter was getting up from the table. Just before rushing over to where he was, Jack handed the hat-check girl his tattered cap. The promoter began to walk toward the door, listening to Dempsey's plea that he get him a match with Morris, or anybody. "I know you can fight, Jack," the promoter said, as they got to the hat-check girl, "but you haven't got a name. Morris is too big for you. Nobody would pay to see you fight him."

Dempsey turned away, sad and embarrassed. In his flustered state, anxious to get away, he gave the hat-check girl the penny instead of the dime. She let Dempsey get all the way to the door, then she opened her mouth and her voice filled the whole restaurant.

"Say, you big bum!" she yelled. "Come back here and get this penny you gave me!" Dempsey slunk back. "Buy yourself a bean sandwich," she said with a glare, and slapped the penny into his big palm.

Dempsey walked dejectedly across the street, met a friend who was also broke, and they spent the dime on doughnuts and coffee. Telling

about it, Dempsey's face stretches into a huge grin. "Now that little babe sure called the turn on me. That's just what I was. A big bum!"

He was a broke pug, a fighter looking for a meal and a place to sleep. But he was also just three years away from his dream. It was the year 1916, and in 1919 he was to be heavyweight champion of the world. At that time, he never doubted it. The dream burned brightly in him. He was proud, he was strong, he was not afraid to work and fight and see himself exactly as he was, a tough hobo who would somehow get up on the top of the heap.

The championship never changed what was inside Dempsey. One of the most touching stories Gene Tunney ever recorded about Dempsey happened while Jack was champ. Gene was just beginning to get a reputation. He was sitting one day on a ferryboat between Jersey City and New York. The last passengers were just coming aboard when Gene's heart began to beat faster. Striding up the plank was a man Gene had seen in innumerable pictures. The wide shoulders, the fighting face were unmistakable. It was Jack Dempsey, the champion of the world.

Gene stopped Dempsey and asked to shake his hand. He told Jack he was a fighter. ". . . What impressed me most," Gene wrote, "was his affable, friendly way. Jack Dempsey is, by nature, one of the most civil persons alive, with an instinct for courtesy."

Dempsey asked Tunney how things were going. Gene said that he was all right, except that he was having trouble with his knuckles. His right hand was damaged, sore, stubbornly unhealing. Dempsey took his hand carefully, examined it thoroughly. He told Tunney how to bandage the hand next time he boxed. He said to bandage up the two sound knuckles on either side of the injured one with black tape. The thickness over the two sound ones would protect the injured one. Then he showed Tunney just how to do the taping, giving him expert advice, giving him the hard-earned knowledge that years of battering with his fists had taught him.

It was that sore right hand of Tunney's, fully healed because of Jack Dempsey's advice, that thudded time and again into the Manassa Mauler's face in Philadelphia to take his championship away from him. But looking at Tunney's hand that night, encouraging a young fighter, was in the Dempsey tradition.

It began long before when Dempsey was a boy, when he fought with the tough kids in the small mountain towns. They bloodied each other's noses, battered each other's ribs, then doctored each other up.

"I was lucky in growing up with a bunch of kids who loved to fight," Dempsey said. "There were the Campbell boys, Fred Wood, Red and Bill Finnegan, Charley Diehl, Jake Fist, my brothers, Bernie and Johnny. I don't think there ever was a tougher bunch of kids."

Those fights began shaping Dempsey into the killer he was in the ring. A fight lasted until the other kid couldn't get up. The sharecroppers and poor farmers let them fight. Why not? Their kids had to be fighters to live. Life was a fight against the elements, against wind and storm and poverty.

Dempsey remembers one of his first fights, when he was eight. He was going at it hammer and tongs with a pal named Fred Daniels. They were egged on by their fathers. Fred's father, watching young Jack butt his head into his son, yelled advice: "Bite him, Fred!" Fred turned his head to hear what his father said. Young Dempsey bopped him on the chin, and the fight was over.

Dempsey generally hit every opponent with everything he had. He was not, as most people believe, a one-punch knockout artist. One punch merely started it. That blow was the stunner. Then Dempsey would belt home a lightning series of vicious rights and lefts, so fast they could hardly be seen, punches that beat his man unconscious.

The Manassa Mauler was seldom the best boxer in the ring, but he was always the best fighter. Tunney found that out at Soldier Field, Chicago, in their second fight. Dempsey was 32 years old then, his legs gone, his punches no longer carrying the steam. But there was still enough zip and hate and fury in him for one last, magnificent go. Tunney caught the full force of it in the famous seventh round when Jack trapped him in a corner and let him have it.

So much has been written about that round and the "long count" that it's almost ridiculous to repeat what happened. Dempsey has taken the blame for not going to his corner. He explains it by saying, honestly, that he had fought too many fights where you stood over your opponent and waited until he got up and then smashed him again. That's what he always had done. That's what always had been done to him. You can't go against the rules you've fought by. Not when you're dazed and exhausted and hungry for the kill.

If it had been Dempsey who had been knocked down, he would have bounced up as soon as he could. He always did. Gene fought a smart, magnificent fight. He fought the way he had been trained to do. But there was something pitiful in the way he kept out of the reach of the aging Dempsey. It was Jack Dempsey's last chance and he knew it.

In Dempsey's eyes as he chased Tunney was more than the killer glare, more than hate. There was pleading, mixed with contempt for a man who would not come in and take a chance with him. And then he stopped, suddenly, and made that wonderful, dramatic, pawing gesture with his gloves and begged Tunney, growling, "Come on. Come on in and fight!" He was saying, in a sense, fight his way, the way fighters fight. Fight the way he did when, blind and reeling and

bloody, he went charging in on Gunner Smith, the way he went after Firpo, out of his head, sick and groggy, but kept coming in. "That's the way you should fight. Come on."

But Tunney retreated. A few rounds later, he clipped Dempsey and knocked him down. Dempsey didn't stay down. He got up and came in for more, holding his tired body together, forcing his trembling legs to support him. Everybody loved Dempsey for that. Everyone—the rich in their box seats, the screaming, shirt-sleeved men in the high, far-away tiers of the stadium, the frenzied women, the kids. Nobody ever forgot the way Dempsey was that night. And, for 14 seconds, he was the greatest champion of all time. He almost did what no fighter had ever done. He almost won the heavyweight title back again.

In 1940, when FDR was elected again, one of the first people to get in to see him and congratulate him on his victory was Jack Dempsey. Roosevelt always liked prizefighters. He knew them all, and Dempsey was one of his favorites. They talked about the fight in Chicago.

"Well, that fight is over, Jack," Roosevelt smiled. "And so is this one. I guess you know how it came out."

Then, as Dempsey told it, the President put out his right arm and asked Dempsey to feel it. "I felt it," Jack said. "Say, that fellow had a hell of a strong right arm. You know what he said to me? 'Jack,' he said, 'if your legs were still as good as my arm, you'd still be champion. That's the trouble with us, Jack; our legs have gone back on us.'"

In his lifetime in the ring, the Manassa Mauler fought 148 fights. He won 108 of them by knockouts, only 25 by decision, and one on a foul. He fought five draws, lost four decisions, and was kayoed only once. Four bouts were ruled no decision. The few times Dempsey talked to the late President, it always surprised him how much Roosevelt knew about his past ring engagements and his early history. It is strange, in a sense, because no two men could have had so completely different backgrounds. And yet, although Roosevelt did not come from the common people, he knew them. He knew their hardships, their aspirations, and their hopes. He also knew who their heroes were and why they worshipped them. And Jack Dempsey was one of those idols.

William Harrison Dempsey was born in a two-room, one-story, wooden cabin on the outskirts of Manassa, Colorado. It was on June 24, 1895, and he was the ninth child in a family of 11 children. Celia and Hiram Dempsey, pioneer people, had moved their family from Logan, West Virginia, to Manassa on a \$300 stake. They came from "feud" country, and were related to the famous Hatfields who fought the equally famous McCoys.

Dempsey's ancestry is as mixed as is most early American stock. Celia Dempsey was Scotch-Irish on her father's side and Cherokee Indian on her mother's, and one of her great grandfathers was Jewish. Hiram

Dempsey, Jack's father, came from the hardy Irish people of County Kildare. The Dempseys were roving, restless, courageous people, springing from ancestors who first dared to cross the Alleghanies. They carried on the pioneer tradition, moved West across the treacherous Rockies, and took part in the building of the Western Empire. Hiram Dempsey was a sharecropper, a hunter, a dirt-poor farmer, a worker who swung a pick on the railroad. He moved his family all over Colorado and Utah.

Hiram Dempsey tried hard, but there was seldom enough for his family. Jack remembers driving to town with him as a boy and buying five dollars worth of staples—to last them a month. He remembers hunting and fishing for meat. He remembers working the hard earth for food. The Dempsey family lived in a succession of crowded shacks. The older children moved out into the world on their own just as soon as they could, to make room for the younger ones. Harry, as Jack was called then, and one of his sisters, Elsie, were the only ones who had even a grammar-school education.

All through his childhood, Jack Dempsey lived just barely beyond the reach of hunger. The Dempseys were poor when Jack was born, and still poor when he left home to roam the country. With the exception of Joe Louis, no heavyweight champion ever came from a background of such hard, unending poverty as Jack Dempsey. As a child, he never had a piece of store-candy. The toys he played with were whittled out of wood by his older brothers. He was shuttled from place to place by wagon. Over the Great Divide to Wagon Wheel Gap, where his mother tried to eke out a living running a boarding house. Then Montrose, where his father worked on the railroad, and his mother tried her hand at running a restaurant called the Rio Grande Eating House.

Before Dempsey was 12, his life as a working stiff began. He chopped wood, hauled coal, toiled in the beet fields, shined shoes in a barber shop, hung around pool rooms and fair grounds picking up odd jobs. He does not remember this time with sorrow. There were good things too. He managed to find time to roam the woods and mountains. He became an expert trapper and hunter. He not only looked like a young Indian physically, but he became as self-sufficient, as stoical, as hard. Years later, when Dempsey was rich and went hunting and trapping for sport, his companions were always amazed by his knowledge of wild life and the great outdoors.

The first name "Jack" was adopted by three of the Dempsey boys. The oldest one, Bernie, took the name because of a popular middleweight champion of the time, Jack Dempsey, the "Nonpareil." Bernie fought many fights through the West, as did Johnny.

It was Bernie who taught his younger brothers, Harry and Johnny, how to strike blows and how to duck. They made their own punching bags out of sawdust and rags. They fought with bare fists or workmen's

gloves stuffed with padding. They chewed gum incessantly to make their jaws strong and knockout-proof.

"We all wanted to be world's heavyweight champion," Dempsey said. "I remember one day my brother Bernie opened a package of cigarettes and a little cardboard picture of Jack Johnson fell out. We all dived for it, fighting and clawing. I got it. I carried it around for years. He was the man I thought I'd have to beat."

When Dempsey finished the eighth grade he left home. He took to the freights, with less than two dollars in his pocket. It was the beginning of the years of restless roving, working, and fighting. He toiled as a ditch digger, switched ties under steam shovels, picked peaches for two dollars a day, worked as a bouncer in dancehalls, a loader in copper mines, a pick-and-shovel man in coal mines. When it started, he was not yet 16 years old.

Dempsey's face and fists became known to railroad cops, to tough hobos, to panhandlers, grifters, the raggedy lot that rode the fast mails and fruit trains, East to West. There were always fights, and Dempsey was generally in them. They were the sort of fights that sometimes ended in a trip to the undertaker if you lost. Fights in the box cars of trains, in back alleys, in barrooms and freight yards. That life added to Jack Dempsey's toughness. That life took up the job his hard childhood had begun. He soaked his hands and face in brine to toughen them. It took a terrible blow to cut his face. He wanted it that way. It was harder to fight with blood in your eyes.

In most towns, fights were not even legal then. Promoters were scarce. Dempsey promoted his first fight himself. He drifted in off the rods to the town of Montrose, Colorado, to look up some pals. Fred Woods, the 200-pound blacksmith's son, was still the toughest guy in the locality, the most skillful fighter.

"Hey, Fred," Dempsey said. "How would you like to fight me? We'll hire a place and make some dough."

Woods agreed. Dempsey hired a ramshackle building called Moose Hall. He strung up a ring, using clothesline rope, and got sawdust for the ring floor. He was his own manager and trainer, working out in the back of the blacksmith's shop. On the night of the fight, Dempsey stood at the door collecting the money. When he had taken in as much as he thought he could get, he walked into the ring, took off his trousers and hung them on the ring-post. He wanted that money to be where he could watch it.

When the fight started, Dempsey forgot about the money. He was too busy slugging Woods and getting slugged back. The first round was about even. In the fourth round, one of Woods' wild swings from the floor caught Dempsey in the stomach and doubled him up. He sat down, bounced up again, and then tore into Woods with rights and lefts. A

chopping, powerful punch almost tore Fred's head off. His eyes went glassy and he sunk to the floor. Dempsey stood over him snarling. Then the anger left his face. He rushed over to a corner, grabbed a bucket of water, and tossed it in Woods' face. When the big blacksmith came around, he wanted to fight some more.

"Take it easy," Dempsey said in his ear. "The fight's over. They got enough for their money. You and me are partners."

Woods got up, smiled, shook Dempsey's hand. They divided the \$46 that Jack had taken in at the door and went out to celebrate.

Watching that fight was a veteran pug named Andy Malloy, a man who had been in tank-town rings all over the West, and in Mexico. He had once taken on Dempsey's brother Bernie, and given him a terrible shellacking. Malloy approached Dempsey after the fight and said he would take him on. Jack agreed with enthusiasm.

A miner named Buck Weaver staged the Dempsey-Malloy fight in a dancehall in Durango, Colorado. Andy was 11 years older than Dempsey, an experienced man in the ring. For the first five rounds, his jabs and uppercuts beat like rain against Dempsey's face. But Jack wouldn't go down. Malloy began to tire, and then Dempsey took over and began chopping him to bits. After the 10th round, the sheriff stepped in and stopped the fight. It was all the gore he could allow in a "boxing exhibition." He called the fight a draw.

Dempsey and Malloy went back to Montrose and staged another fight in Moose Hall. This time, in the first two rounds, Malloy had Dempsey groggy, his knees wobbling. But at the start of the third round Dempsey sailed back out as though the fight had just begun. He had the kill in his eyes as he battered through Malloy's defense. He knocked him stiff with a left hook. When Malloy came to, he grinned up at Dempsey.

"Kid," he said, "you're too good to be riding the rails. I'm gonna teach you how to be a fighter."

With the exception of Jack Kearns, there never was any manager and friend that Jack Dempsey liked as well as Andy Malloy. He could not make a boxer of Dempsey, although he tried hard, but he taught Jack all the tricks of the trade he had picked up in the resin-soaked rings of the West. He showed Dempsey how to improve the punches that had knocked him out, how to get more weight behind them. He had him punch the bag with lead weights in his hands to pick up power and drive and to strengthen his muscles.

The first fight Malloy arranged for Dempsey was in a Colorado town named Olathe. There was a winner-take-all agreement, but before the fight started, the sheriff stepped in and said the boys would have to wrestle; he couldn't allow a prize-fight. Dempsey's big opponent slammed Jack to the mat in two straight falls, and picked up all the money.

Malloy got hungry and took a job in a mine. Dempsey went back to the road. He hit Salt Lake City and fought several mauling fights there. He fought in Price, Provo, Ogden. He fought three fights with a murderous husky named Jack Downey, for a total of \$30. They fought in the Garrick Theater, and Jack took a terrible pasting in the first go, got a draw the second time, and knocked Downey cold in the third. Dempsey fought men who outweighed him 30 and 40 and even 50 pounds. He picked up managers and dropped them. He traveled all over the West, fighting fierce brawls, winning most of them by knockouts, until few would fight him. He had to go back to the mines to make a living.

Jack's brother, Bernie, was the foreman on one of Jack's first jobs in a copper mine south of the Great Salt Lake. Young Dempsey, still in his teens, toiled 3,000 feet underground as a mucker. He worked his way up to timber man, then to miner, for the magnificent salary of six dollars a day. Once, when he was breaking out ore, a big, tough gent teased him by dropping chunks of dirt on his neck. Dempsey went up the bank after him. It was a kid against a man, but Dempsey knocked him cold in a few minutes. If the other miners hadn't intervened, he might have killed him.

Dempsey's father tried to stake an old claim on a coal mine back in Logan, West Virginia, and Jack went out to help him. It fizzled out, and Dempsey took a job shoveling coal at 50 cents a day. He wound up back in Colorado with Bernie, who got him another job in the Cripple Creek Mine and a bout against a tremendous barrel-chested, grizzly bear of a man named George Copelin.

Dempsey was not used to the altitude. Copelin was. As the rounds wore on, the fighters charged and slugged and ripped each other with fierce blows. Dempsey's face soon was almost unrecognizable. Copelin was covered with blood from his chest to the top of his head.

Let Dempsey tell it. "The rounds began to blur together. When I took a breath, it was like I was on fire. I had knocked Copelin down again and again, but he kept getting up. I had been down myself, I don't know how many times. I told Bernie I was through. He would get me the next round. Bernie said he was as dead as I was.

"I went out at the bell. Rush him! That's all I thought. Rush him and swing just once more. I felt his face hit my glove. I didn't know whether I could stay on my feet. If he got up again, I would fall down in his place. Then I felt somebody lift my hand over my head and I had won."

Dempsey got \$50 for that fight. And then went on down to Goldfield, Nevada, for those two savage tiffs with Sudenberg. After those battles, he began wandering the West again, picking up fights wherever he could. He weighed only 165 to 170 at the time, and he would take on anyone. His eyes were still on the championship, but the more he fought, the further he seemed away from it.

It was the year 1916. Two young men stood gawking in Times Square. One was a pleasant-faced, regular-featured, slim young man named Jack Price. The other was a tough-looking, wide-shouldered, shy but scowling roughneck with the unmistakable scars and nervous manners of a pug. The fighter was Jack Dempsey. He was 21 years old. He had several years of fighting behind him. Price was his new manager. They had made enough in bouts in Utah and Nevada to try a go at the big city. They were eager and scared and filled with hope and touched with despair. They had \$27 between them.

Nobody had ever heard of Jack Dempsey in New York. The tattered newspaper clippings which Price showed to promoters drew little interest. But Price finally got Jack a bout with a 215-pound giant named Andre Anderson at the Fairmont Athletic Club on 149th Street and Third Avenue.

Billy Gibson, who later became Tunney's manager, owned the Fairmont Club. He came around one day to Grupp's gym to watch Dempsey work out. Jack weighed 173 pounds, and Gibson, watching Dempsey, turned to Price and said: "This fight ought to be called off. Anderson will murder your boy, and it'll hurt the reputation of my club."

That was always the thing they said about Dempsey in the days when he fought the giants. At least, that's what they said before they saw him fight. Jack and Anderson fought 10 rounds. For the first five rounds, Anderson, a hard-hitting boxer, smeared Jack's nose all over his face. By the tenth round, Dempsey had the big man cowering and covering to protect himself.

Dempsey and Price got exactly \$16 for that fight. The next match, a rougher go with a bruiser named Wild Bert Kenney, netted the Dempsey-Price combo \$43. Dempsey won the fight, knocking Kenney down three times in a last-round slug-fest.

Around the gyms in New York, fighters and hangers-on began to talk about this "little guy" Dempsey who fought like a fury. Then Jack Price got a telegram saying his mother was dying in Salt Lake City, and he sold his interest in Dempsey to get enough money to go home. The buyer was a hard-boiled, cold-hearted man named John Reisler, known in fight circles as "John the Barber." John ran a barber shop when he wasn't promoting fights or managing.

Reisler paid Dempsey off in meals and free shaves and haircuts. He unscrupulously overmatched the youngster with a burly Negro fighter named John Lester Johnson. Nobody in town would fight the massive Johnson at that time, but the kid from Manassa took him on at the Harlem Sporting Club. It was a fight that even the most hardened fans did not enjoy watching.

In the second round, Johnson caught Dempsey with a piledriver right hand that broke two of Jack's ribs. For the next three rounds, Dempsey

fought doubled up. The pain was too great for him to stand even half erect. But he went on fighting for 10 rounds, and earned what some sportswriters called a draw. He was promised \$500 for the fight, but he got \$100, which went for hospital bills. John the Barber was disgusted because Dempsey would be out of commission for months. He refused to carry him. Dempsey, flat broke, had to leave New York, and bum West again to the mines.

But it was that body punch of Johnson's that eventually made Dempsey a champion. He reasoned that if a punch to the body could do that much harm, he would learn how to use it. The giants that Dempsey fought after that came to fear the way the Manassa Mauler would pump buzz-saw rights and lefts to their bodies, cutting them down to his height, making them bring their guards down, and then blasting them in the jaw. Other fighters paid dearly for what Johnson did to Dempsey.

Dempsey worked in the mines until his ribs healed. Then he knocked out a fighter named Young Hector at Salida, Colorado, collected \$300, and hit the road back to New York. John Reisler was ready to get him another match. He wanted Dempsey to fight Gunboat Smith. The Gunner was the third ranking heavyweight in the country. For once, Dempsey said no.

"I knew," Jack explained, "that Gunboat Smith was too good. My already battered dream of winning the championship would be knocked through the ropes if, at this stage of the game, I pounded myself to death against fighters who were still too good for me."

Dempsey also turned down a fight against Frank Moran, then touted, along with Carl Morris and Gunner Smith, as the next challenger of the champion, Big Jess Willard. It was the wisest thing Dempsey ever did. He later went on to beat all three of these men under the guidance of Kearns.

Reisler dropped Dempsey and the fighter went back West a second time, to take on a promising heavyweight named Fireman Jim Flynn. The fight was held in the town of Murray, on the outskirts of Salt Lake City. Bernie came on to act as Jack's second in the ring. Still a crude and unfinished fighter, Dempsey didn't even warm up before going into the ring against the highly-touted Flynn. He went in "cold," rushed Flynn, who caught him with a beautiful right wallop that sent him crashing to the canvas. Dempsey got up. He rushed. Flynn caught him again. It happened three times. Bernie, in the corner, couldn't take it any longer, and tossed in the towel.

In the dressing room, in a raging black and bitter mood, Dempsey berated his brother. "When you tossed in that towel," he said, "there went the championship."

"You'd never be champion if he killed you," Bernie said.

"I wish he had," Dempsey said.

Dempsey was dogged by all sorts of adverse criticism in his life, but nothing hurt him so deeply as the accusation that he tossed that fight to Flynn. Throwing a fight is the worst thing you could accuse a man like Dempsey of doing. On the face of it, common sense judgment would indicate that Dempsey would not have thrown that fight for all the money in the mint. The years of knocking about, of fighting for small purses, had just about come to an end when Dempsey met Flynn. He was beginning to get a reputation. The Flynn fight ruined all that. He had to start all over again.

It was rough going now to get fights. But Dempsey somehow managed to get them and, against one of the best heavies in the country, Al Norton, he scored a one-round knockout. Out in San Francisco, a sharp-eyed man named Jack Kearns began to take notice of a kid named Dempsey. Then Kearns read that Dempsey had beaten a former fighter of his named Joe Bonds, a very classy heavyweight.

Kearns sent for Dempsey. He mailed him a railroad ticket from Salt Lake City to Oakland, enclosing five dollars for meals. That five bucks for eats impressed Dempsey more than anything Kearns ever did for him. Years later, when the millions began to roll in, it was Dempsey who insisted that Kearns get 50 percent of everything he made in the ring. Not until long after Dempsey had become champion of the world did they have a written contract.

Jack Kearns wasn't on hand when Dempsey got to Frisco. He had left instructions, however, that Dempsey was to live at the Kearns' home in Oakland. Mrs. Kearns treated young Dempsey as though he were her own son. She became "Mother Kearns" to him, almost as beloved as his own mother. She was a sweet and gracious and wonderfully warm person. She took in the road-hardened bum and gave him a home such as he had never known.

Dempsey and Kearns became as close as brothers. At first, Doc brought him along slowly, got on to Dempsey's ways, arranged matches that would give him confidence and experience. Then, one night about a year after their first meeting, Kearns told Dempsey that he had arranged a match with Gunboat Smith. This time, Dempsey was ready.

The Gunner Smith-Dempsey fight, at the Mission Ball Park in San Francisco, was the turning point in the Manassa Mauler's career. Nobody but Doc Kearns conceded Dempsey a chance. It was a foregone conclusion that the Gunner would lower the boom on Dempsey, finish him off fast with one of his tremendous fists. But it turned out to be a fight. A hell of a fight. Nobody remembers less about what happened after the second round than Jack Dempsey.

In the second frame, the Gunner maneuvered Dempsey into a corner. He got his opening and let the kid have it. It was a right swing to the

jaw, catching Dempsey coming in. Smith put his shoulders into it. The men in the top row of the grandstand heard the smack. Dempsey's knees wobbled. He fell into the Gunner and hung on. And then he began fighting. He fought in a fog, in a haze of cobwebs, fought with all the fury of his six years of being a life-battered bum, of taking it on the chin for nothing, fought with a deadly, furious hatred, fought intuitively.

On the ferry boat on the way back to Oakland, Dempsey looked at Kearns with misery in his eyes. He muttered incoherently. Kearns leaned over and patted his shoulder, smiling.

"I guess this fight washes me up," Dempsey mumbled . . . "I'm sorry . . . sorry."

It dawned on Kearns then that Dempsey thought he had lost.

"What's the matter with you?" Kearns shouted. "Listen to me, kid, you *won!* Boy, you're going to be the next champion."

Dempsey began to come out of the punch-drunk mists. He had remembered not one thing after Gunner Smith connected in that second round. Slowly the corners of his mouth began to turn up in a painful smile and he looked at Kearns in amazement. He had won! He couldn't believe it . . .

Doc Kearns began to open his mouth about Dempsey. Out of that clever and publicity-minded mouth came some of the greatest ballyhoo talk of the century. Kearns proclaimed Dempsey the coming champion. He offered \$10,000 to any fighter who could lick him. He hit the newspapers across the nation with colorful and exciting stories about his young giant killer, the Manassa Mauler, the toughest man ever to come out of the West.

Kearns talked. Dempsey fought. He took on the big Cherokee slugger, Carl Morris, and beat him in a fierce fight. Morris weighed 235 pounds, stood six feet four inches, and was the top-ranking contender for the crown. To stay out of the way of Morris' sledgehammer fists, Dempsey had to bob and weave. It was the beginning of his famous style, the manner in which he always beat men bigger than himself.

The life with Kearns was a new one for Dempsey. They rode the cushions to Chicago, slept in the best hotels, wore silk shirts, ate in the flashiest restaurants. In Chicago Kearns' tales about Dempsey grew more fantastic and wonderful. He offered to bet 10 grand that Dempsey could beat any *two* fighters in the world in one night. It was a bluff. Kearns didn't have the 10 thousand then. But the presses began to roll about Jack Dempsey. Crowds gathered at Kid Howard's gym in Chicago to see the young wonder work out. They always went away disappointed. All his life Dempsey never looked good in gym fighting.

But in the ring a few weeks later against the massive, powerful Homer Smith, a six-foot, three-inch clouter, Dempsey was everything

Kearns had said he was. Just before the gong sounded for the first round, Kearns growled into Dempsey's ear those words from manager to fighter that were to become famous as ring talk.

"Kid, pull up your socks and smack that big bum down."

Dempsey scowled and went in. The fight lasted one minute and 55 seconds. Dempsey viciously battered the big man to the canvas.

A few days later, Jack was in the ring against still another fighter, against the man who 12 months before had knocked him out, Fireman Jim Flynn. They fought in Fort Sheridan, Illinois. It was a different Dempsey this time. He spent a half-hour warming up before the fight and knocked out Jim Flynn midway through the first round. Now he was really climbing up there.

From February 14, 1918 to July 4, 1919, the Manassa Mauler belted his way through the biggest and best heavyweights in the country. He fought 23 battles, winning 20 of them by knockouts, 16 of them in the first round. The fight that set him up for the title, the one that gained him his greatest reputation as a giant killer, was the go against the six-foot, six-inch Goliath, Fred Fulton. They fought in Harrison, New Jersey, on July 27, 1918. Dempsey cooled him in 18 seconds, one of the quickest KO's in heavyweight history.

Only one man in those days ever gave Jack Dempsey any serious trouble. He was a fat, jolly, but tough customer named Slapper Willie Meehan. The corpulent Meehan looked slow in the ring, but he was one of the cleverest boxers of his time, a cutie in close, a dazzling counter-puncher. Dempsey lost two decisions to Meehan, and won one. It was one of those strange things in fight history. Meehan, never a top-rate fighter, always gave Dempsey a tough time.

With the exception of Carpentier, Dempsey never looked as good against smaller men as he did against the bigger ones. Billy Miske, Jack Downey, Tommy Gibbons, and Gene Tunney always made things rough for the Mauler. He never seemed to be able to keep up that killer instinct against them. He never liked boxers. He liked to fight.

When Jack Dempsey won the heavyweight title of the world from Jess Willard on July 4, 1919, it should have been the happiest time of his life. It wasn't. Even though he had lived up to his reputation, and beaten a man five inches taller and 60 pounds heavier, Dempsey's satisfaction was short-lived. He knew he was not a popular champion. He was envied, but not loved. He was shy, uneducated, painfully unfitted for the social life that goes with being a champion.

Jack's difficulties with the U. S. Government during World War I didn't help him any. He was just clawing his way to the top when the war broke out, and he got a job in an Oakland, California, shipyard. Naturally, he was accused widely of being a slacker. The Government made a test case out of Jack's action, seeking to establish whether or not

a worker in such an essential industry was exempt from the draft. Jack won the case. He was acquitted. But the stigma of alleged draft evasion clung to him for years. No help to him was the famous picture taken of him in working clothes, with shiny black patent leather shoes peeking out from under his dungarees.

"My life up to then was like a war," Dempsey said. "It seemed there would be no end to it. I fought and fought. I thought I never would be champ. But there was something to shoot at. And then one day the war ended. I was the champion. It was all over.

"When you're a champion," Dempsey went on simply, "they take your life away from you. They put you on the stage. They put you in nightclubs. They take away the fresh air. They make you live the life of a gentleman of the city. I didn't belong. I knew it. Now I belong," he smiled slowly. "Now it's natural. But it wasn't then. I was just a tough guy out of my element."

When the Manassa Mauler fought Georges Carpentier, it was a bitter thing for him to know that most Americans were pulling for the Frenchman to win. The gallant Carpentier, a smiling handsome man with an enviable war record, captured the hearts and imaginations of fight fans. Staged by the great promoter Tex Rickard, the fight drew the first million-dollar gate. Nearly a hundred thousand people jammed into Boyle's Thirty Acres to see the classy French fighter go up against the killer.

What a contrast the two men made in the ring! Carpentier with his smiling, friendly face, classic profile, his beautiful body covered by a well-cut, expensive dressing robe. And Dempsey. Dempsey wearing the scowl on his unshaven, pugnacious fighter's face. Over his powerful chest was the old red jersey he had worn in training.

The event was packed with drama, but it was not a great fight. The tough guy beat up the gentleman. Carpentier proved only what everybody knew. He had courage and was willing to fight. But he was in the ring against a man who was stronger and tougher and could hit harder. And Dempsey was too much of a fighter to carry him. After 57 seconds of the fourth round, after Carpentier had taken the Mauler's vicious pounding, he couldn't get up and go on. He was never the same after that fight.

The 1923 fight against Tommy Gibbons in Shelby, Montana, was the worst fiasco as a fight that Dempsey ever fought as a champion. The bankers and promoters of the small town went broke staging the bout. The battle was a long, dull affair. Gibbons outboxed the champion, but Dempsey's aggressiveness gave him a wide margin on points. Kearns and Dempsey had to get out of town fast to keep from being mobbed by irate fight fans and the broke, small-town promoters.

But three months later, the thrills that were packed into the two rounds that the Manassa Mauler fought against Firpo completely erased

the stigma of the Shelby fight. Jack was the Dempsey of old that night. It was a return to the David-and-Goliath fights that had made the name of Dempsey ring across the land. It was the last fight Jack Dempsey won as a champion and undoubtedly one of his greatest.

When the bell sounded for the second round, every person in the Polo Grounds was still standing. They saw the unbelievable. They saw Jack Dempsey come out of his corner, hooking, weaving, throwing punches at the big man who had knocked him out of the ring. Firpo went down. He got up. Dempsey was standing over him, ready for the kill. Firpo went down again. Once more he got up. But it was the last time. The clock read 57 seconds when the final count was finished. The hand of the Manassa Mauler was held high in the air.

In the three years that passed before Jack Dempsey fought Gene Tunney, all that had made Dempsey the greatest fighting machine of his time crumbled away and was gone forever. The 18th champion of the world was 31 years old. He was out of shape. Three years of inactivity had dulled the spirit, softened the punch, killed the ferocity. His old friend, Doc Kearns, who had split with him, was harassing him with law suits. "Every time I hit a punching bag," Dempsey told reporters, "I expect a summons to fall out."

The first Tunney fight was held in the rain in the gigantic Sesqui-Centennial Stadium in Philadelphia. Slowly, as the rounds dragged on, as Tunney's counter-punching began to take effect, Dempsey saw the title slipping away. He hated to lose it. But he lost it like a champion.

Once, between rounds, Dempsey gave himself the old command that Doc Kearns had growled in his ear so many times. "Pull up your socks and smack the big bum down." He came out with a rush. He charged into Tunney with some of the old fury. But there wasn't enough. And from then on, he settled down to take the beating, concentrating on only one thing—staying on his feet. He stayed. His face was not pretty to see at the close of the fight. He could barely lift his hands above his shoulders. The title was gone. . . .

The dressing room after the Dempsey-Tunney fight was filled with people who didn't know what to say. They came over to the tired and puffy-faced ex-champion, patted his shoulder sympathetically, and mumbled regrets. Dempsey sat on a wooden table, his head down, hiding his misery.

Over in a corner, a poorly dressed, thin-faced derelict of a man who had slipped into the room unnoticed, watched the proceedings with calloused eyes. Suddenly the room was very quiet. The old Manassa Mauler glanced up and noticed the old fellow. He looked, Dempsey said, like one of the countless bums he had ridden the rods with in his early days, one of the nameless faces of the hard and hungry past. Their eyes met for an instant.

The old fellow spoke. "Hi, Jack."

"Hello, pal," Dempsey said.

The old geezer grinned and shook his head. "This shouldn't be like no wake," he said to the room. "What if he is still the champion and what if he ain't? He's young, ain't he? He's got dough, ain't he? He's famous, ain't he? I ask you—what's the championship of the world to a guy like that?"

Dempsey got up and walked over to the old fellow. He put his hand on his shoulders. "Those are pretty smart words, pardner. I'll remember 'em."

Dempsey has said that the best job he has ever had in his life was being the champion, and the next best job was being the ex-champion. Sentiment changed toward the Manassa Mauler. Like a gong that had ended a round, all the old grudges and malice and dislike melted away under the warmth and genuine humility and greatness of the new Dempsey.

He beat a stronger, younger man, Jack Sharkey, a man with a fine boxing skill and a strong punch. He climbed back into the ring again against Tunney in Chicago, on September 22, 1927, still full of fight, still scowling.

In that thrilling seventh round, the men who had been boys when the Manassa Mauler was belting down the giants, saw a brief and beautiful flash of the old killer in action. It was wonderful, but nobody knew better than Jack Dempsey that it was his last rush, the last charge that he would make, the last flurry of the vicious stunning blows that had made him a champion. And, for 14 seconds, he was the champion again.

The old itch to fight kept coming back. It is still in him. At 37 years of age, Dempsey consented to fight four rounds against a rising, 21-year-old fighter named Kingfish Levinsky. He took another licking, grinned about it, shook his head and said, "A man should know when he's through. It wasn't Levinsky that made me realize it, it was Old Man Time." But the fans who had booed and hissed him at Shelby, Montana, who had wanted to see Georges Carpentier, a Frenchman, beat him, at Boyle's Thirty Acres, now stood up and cheered him to the rafters, crowded his dressing room, told him he was the greatest fighter that ever lived, shook his hand and said that Dempsey could have licked Levinsky with one hand in his youth.

Dempsey got married again, this time to the singer Hannah Williams. They had two girls, Joan and Barbara. Strollers in Central Park often saw Dempsey out with the carriage, followed by kids and well wishers. When they were divorced, the world was happy because Dempsey was given custody of his children. He has given them the best in life, the things he never had.

The second world war came. Dempsey went down to enlist. The doc-

tors marvelled at the condition of the 50-year-old man who had lived life up to the hilt. He went into the Coast Guard, instructed in physical training, refereed fights on boats shuttling GIs to Europe and the Pacific. And, on one of these boats, an incident occurred that added one final touch to the legend of the Manassa Mauler.

Dempsey had been refereeing fights aboard the S.S. Wakefield. One big, bruising heavyweight was giving the old mauler a lot of trouble. This fellow, an ex-pro, swaggered around the ship boasting that he could lick anybody on board. Dempsey had refereed several of his matches and the big 210-pounder was almost as good as he said he was. One afternoon the ex-pro fought a three-rounder with a smaller man who gave him a terrific fight. Dempsey called it a draw. The bruiser saw red, accused Dempsey of unfairness, turned on him snarling, and said, "You know damn well I can lick anybody on this lousy tub. How about you? Wanna start something?"

Dempsey scowled. He tried to keep his temper. He knew how old 50 is. But the GIs aboard didn't know. To them, he was still Jack Dempsey, an idol, a man who could lick anybody. They egged the fight on. The big pro sneered and dared Dempsey to face him. It was too much for the old Manassa Mauler.

"I should have known better," Jack grinned, telling about it. "He gave me quite a pasting in that first round."

The second round came up. The big pro came out, smiling meanly, moving in for the kill. Suddenly another man moved in the ring. It was Dempsey. In a blinding now-or-never rush, the old legs carried him forward with lightning speed, the right hand sunk into the other fighter's body, the old mauler's left hook crashed through like a rocket. The big man went down and out. He was as cold as the ocean spray. The GIs screamed and pounded each other on the back. The scowl on Dempsey's face changed to a grin. He looked at his hands. He was not through, after all. Maybe he never would be.

On Okinawa, on D-Day, the assault troops crouched in one of the landing craft, looked anxiously at the shore, at the hills beyond the beaches where the big guns had been pounding for days. They squatted on their haunches, peered anxiously over the side, held their weapons in tense arms. Then one of them looked over at another of the craft going beachward alongside of them. "Hey, look," he yelled. "Ain't that Jack Dempsey?"

They waved at Dempsey. Jack waved back. "Hi, pals, see you on Broadway." Some of them did get back, and did go in to see him on Broadway. They came in—and are still coming in—to shake his hand, to pat his massive back, to talk about the things of war, their war. They come to get the genuine Jack Dempsey autograph, to listen to the champ say a few words about his old fights and the days when his scowl and

his fists made him the toughest guy in the ring, the Manassa Mauler, the world champion.

Way down in this corner is a tribute to the life-battered bum who became a beloved man, to the courageous fighter who would never quit, to the old Manassa Mauler and the gentleman, Jack Dempsey. It has been a long time since he was last seen, crouching and weaving in the ring. But the memory of the way he was still remains. The legend of Dempsey has been riveted into ring history. He stands with the greatest fighters of all time, an unparalleled heavyweight champion of the world, a man who never backed away from anyone in the ring, or from the blows dealt in a magnificent, hard, and glorious life.

HONUS WAGNER

The Flying Dutchman

By Jack Sher

GET outa my way, kid, or I'll spit in your eye!" The kid backed away from the plate, dropped long arms that reached almost to the knees of his bow legs. He had been playing as a regular in the Louisville outfield for five days and every time he had tried to take his turn in batting practice he had been driven away. As he came back to the dugout, Manager Fred Clarke met him.

"Why didn't you take your cuts?"

"They won't let me," the kid said, pleasantly.

"Get back in that box, or get off this ball club!" the manager roared.

The kid, who was 75 years old in 1949, was telling the story as if it had happened yesterday, although it actually occurred in 1897, when life was hell on earth for any rookie breaking into the blood-and-thunder, nail-hard National League. He told it with love, his alert, brown eyes enjoying each remembered detail, his huge, spike-scarred right paw shaking slightly as he told it.

"So I marched back up to the plate," he chuckled, "and this big geezer wheels around and lets a spray of 'bacca juice at my feet and asks me what do I think I'm gonna do? So I hoist up my bat and take a good aim at his head and I tell him I'm gonna hit at somethin' and I don't much give a damn what it is!"

As the bat lunged forward, the veteran ballplayer leaped clear, saving his noggin a long trip over the left-field fence. And from that day on, nobody in the entire National League ever bullied or bothered the rugged, quaintly stubborn, amiable, sweet-tempered kid out of the coal mines of Carnegie. They stood aside and watched with awe and affection as his magnificently bowed legs carried the huge, squat, awkward, bearlike frame through 21 years of big league baseball, creating the deathless legend of the Flying Dutchman, Ol' Honus.

The wonderful Wagner, John Peter (Honus) Wagner, who is almost half as old as our nation, began playing organized baseball 110 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence and he has yet to

hang up his battered spikes. When spring rolls around, the letters that spell out "Pirates" sprawl across his still burly chest, and he lumbers forth to have a look at the rookies of this atomic age. At 75, he is the oldest ballplayer in uniform.

No one who knows Honus Wagner, who has hung around the Pittsburgh clubhouse and watched him dress for the day's game, would dream of referring to him as an ex-ballplayer. Unlike the other three or four great players of all time, the beloved old Dutchman has never stopped being a ballplayer. With an impish twinkle in his eyes, wagging his heavy, white-thatched head, looking like a Santa Claus in his baggy bloomers, he will tell you, "I don't play regularly any more. They got me down on the roster as a coach."

This writer, among others, has written that Ty Cobb was the greatest ballplayer in the history of the game. (John J. McGraw, if he were alive, would argue all day that Wagner was greater.) But that doesn't matter. No player has ever been so completely *all baseball* as Honus Wagner. Tyrus had other interests beside baseball, hates stronger than the game, and a love of money. The Babe was more than a ballplayer. He became a national figure larger than the game itself, heroic to many who had never seen baseball played.

But Wagner, well, Honus was and is a baseball player and, greatly, nothing else. In street clothes in one of our American cities, he would walk unknown, a shadow. In uniform, or near things related to baseball, he gives forth an aura of light, a special glory, becomes the living symbol of the game, indestructible and forever young.

"Wherever we go, Honus is still the first among us," said Jim Long, press representative of the Pirates. "Out in Hollywood where we train, on the road, or here in town, Wagner is still the star attraction. He gets more attention than Kiner or Westlake, or anyone. Kids whose grandfathers saw him play, who at first don't even know who he is, seem to feel that he is the thing to see, to crowd around, to question. That's the way it is and it's sort of wonderful, especially for me, who saw him play and know how great he was."

Age has withered Wagner very little, nor staled the infinite variety of the stories he tells about baseball. One of his tales about Cap Anson seems as fresh as a dropped comment about Joe DiMaggio. No printed words can approach the delight of sitting across from Honus and listening to the lore that pours out of him. Ask such youngsters as Bing Crosby or Pie Traynor about lending an ear to Wagnerian yarns.

"Wasn't such a friendly spirit between clubs in my day," Honus said at a session one afternoon in his home high on a hill overlooking the smoky town of Carnegie. "Used to be kinda rough."

Honus remembers the Giants and Cubs with particular affection, for these clubs gave the slashing, rough-and-tumble Pirates their toughest

competition. Chicago's famed trio, the Tinker to Evers to Chance boys, are more than just hazy, legendary figures to Wagner. They are the stuff of flesh and blood and the mention of Frank Chance, player-manager, brings forth a host of memories.

"Old Frank was a terror," Honus said. "There was no holds barred when we played against those Cubs. One series in Chicago they beat us three out of three games and those ginks were climbin' all over us, spikin' and punchin' and makin' us miserable."

As Honus told it, the Pirates limped back to Pittsburgh and after a day of rest got set for another series against Chicago. In those days, managers seldom pep-talked the players before games. But before the start of this second series, Fred Clarke called his Pirates together in the dressing room. He was hopping mad.

"How many of you guys got hurt in that last series?" he yelled. "Stand up, let's see you."

Six of the nine regulars stood up.

"All right. Now I'm gonna give a hundred bucks to the man who does the most damage to that Cub team!"

A shout went up. Howie Camnitz, who was pitching that day, climbed up on a bench and delivered what, for him, was a long speech.

"You fellahs know I can't hit," he said. "I won't be able to get on base and bounce 'em around that way. I'm gonna win that hunnert bucks, though. I'm gonna get two strikes on the batter and then knock him down with the next pitch."

Clarke scowled. "That sounds good. I just want to warn you guys that if I catch one of you talkin' to those birds, except to cuss 'em out, it will cost you fifty bucks."

The Pittsburgh team took to the field like an Indian war party and, before the sixth inning, two Cubs had been carried off the diamond. One of them had tried to shove a hip into Honus as this peaceful Pirate came tanklike into second base. The Cubs took two straight games. Coming in to dress for the third fracas, Wagner was amazed to see Frank Chance loitering outside the Pirate dressing room.

"Tell Clarke I want to see him," Chance growled.

"I'll tell him," Honus said, "but you'd better not be here when he comes out."

Honus delivered the message, then followed Clarke out to where Frank Chance was waiting. The two men began arguing excitedly, their noses a quarter of an inch apart. Wagner moved a respectful distance away to allow them to fight it out. A good 10 minutes went by. They seemed to become almost friendly. Then both suddenly broke into violent arm waving and shaking of fists. Honus decided to break it up.

"When I got there," Honus laughed, "they were going at it hot and heavy, a-cussin' out John McGraw! They had already agreed to stop

playin' dirty against each other and concentrate on cripplin' McGraw and his Giants. That year the Giants tied us for second place, the Cubs beating us both out by half a game!"

Fred Clarke was Honus Wagner's manager for all but two years of the great Pirate's major-league career. It was outfielder-manager Clarke who switched Wagner from the outfield to shortstop. He did not put Honus at that position because he felt that Wagner would perform better at short. He knew then, as the years proved, that Hans would become a star no matter where he played.

Honus Wagner became the greatest shortstop of all time, but literally dozens of veteran players have said time and again that he was also the greatest player of his generation *at any position he chose to play*. And he played them all. He roamed the outfield, and played every slot in the infield. As late as 1913, he took the mound as a pitcher against Brooklyn with the Pirates behind, 8-0. Pittsburgh won 9-8, and Honus drove in the winning runs!

A grin creeps across Wagner's face when he recalls the day in 1902 when he was sent in to play short. Bones Ely, the regular shortstop, had reached a climax in his feud with Fred Clarke. Envious of Clarke's managerial position, Ely complained of a sore finger that day and refused to play.

"All right, Honus," Clarke said, "you play in his place."

"Hell, I'm no shortstop," Wagner said. "I've never played it in the major leagues."

The Pittsburgh newspapermen, who had never seen Wagner in the infield, were inclined to agree with his opinion of himself. They thought Ely was as classy as they come and they cornered Clarke before game time and expressed their feelings.

"You'd better get used to Wagner," Clarke snapped. "He's staying in there if he makes 400 errors a day!"

When Honus trotted out to take over the position, he was met by a tremendous chorus of boos and catcalls from Ely's fans. They howled and yelled for him to continue on to the outfield, where they believed he belonged. Honus waved a large, friendly hand and parked his bent legs firmly between second and third, looking about as graceful as a beat-up snowplow.

No one in the stands that day had ever seen such an unorthodox chunk of baseball machinery in action. He was grotesquely awkward, seemingly off-balance on every play, his bow legs chewing the ground, his huge arms swinging apelike from massive shoulders. But what miracles that top-heavy, clumsy-looking giant performed as he charged like a great bull, making impossible stops with glove and bare hand as he scooped up gravel and dirt along with the ball and threw runners out from every imaginable position!

For over two decades, the beloved Dutchman was the most inelegant, ungraceful-appearing human ever bunched into a uniform. The only good thing you could say about the way he looked out there at short-stop was that nothing the more swan-like players hit ever got past him. Or, as McGraw said, "the way to get a ball past Honus is to hit it eight feet over his head!" His lifetime fielding average was .946.

Honus was no "picture player" at the plate. From the rear, he looked as though he was sitting on an invisible burro. He would hunch over the rear of the platter like a primeval man about to club a wild beast to death. He never swung at a ball; he would lunge at it, bat and ball player traveling forward in one clumsy, superhuman effort. Somehow, as if Fate willed it, wood connected with horsehide, the speed of the ball creating a high wind in the infield. His line drives were murderous screamers.

"As a hitter, he had absolutely no weaknesses," Jimmy Long said. "A pitcher would throw one low and inside and Hans would miss it a foot. The pitcher would throw another one in the same spot and Honus would knock the cover off the ball. I think he did this deliberately. You couldn't even walk him! They had to change the rules because Wagner refused to be walked."

In a game against Cincy in 1906, a hurler decided to play it safe and pass Honus. The catcher stepped out from behind the plate to take the toss-outs. Hans wasn't having any of that. As the throw came down, he leaped a distance of some six feet across the plate and slammed a double into deep center field.

A baseball legend credits Wagner with the longest home run in the history of the game, a liner off Red Ames that rocketed out of the Polo Grounds and clean over the elevated station beyond the center-field fence. According to one version of the story, nobody saw the ball drop—it just traveled on a line out of sight. But that was many years ago . . .

From 1900 to 1911, the magnificent Honus led the league in hitting eight times, four of them in succession. He took his licks against such tolerable pitchers as Christy Mathewson, Rube Waddell, Grover Cleveland Alexander, Kid Nichols, Mordecai Brown, and Amos Rusie. His BA against the great Matty was .324!

For his first 17 years as a big leaguer, Hans never hit below .300. He led the league in doubles eight times. Briefly and sweetly, he holds almost all the National League batting records. He holds the record for the most singles, 2,431; the most doubles, 648; the most triples, 250.

When you mention these lifetime marks to Hans, he smiles benignly and says, "I guess I hit pretty fair. Did I ever tell you about the time I came up with three men on and nobody out and never got a chance to swing at the ball? That was against Chicago and those birds Tinker,

Evers, and Chance trapped and tagged out all three base runners while I was standin' there holdin' the bat."

On the base paths they called Honus "the Ty Cobb of the National League." But old-timers like pitcher Deacon Phillippe snort and holler when they hear this and claim that Wagner proved in the fire and brimstone of competition with Cobb that he was speedier and deadlier in stealing bases. Honus led the league in thefts five times, reaching his height in 1907 when he copped 61 bases to top both the National and American Leagues.

"In that 1909 series, playing against Detroit, he made Cobb look like 30 cents!" Phillippe said in his deep, booming voice. "And I never saw him spike a man, either. He could stop and start quicker than a 130-pounder, and he weighed close to 200 in those days."

The wonderful Dutchman never equalled the base-swiping records of the Georgia Flash, but he was the only ballplayer in either league whom anyone dared to compare with the tremendous Ty. Honus' speed as he circled the bases was deceptive. He took long, ungainly bounds, resembling a truck on a bumpy road. Only those who had the misfortune to get in his way realized how fast he was moving. At Spring training, running the 100-yard dash against such fleet outfielders as Clarence Beaumont, Tommy Leach, and Fred Clarke, Honus was frequently timed in 10 seconds flat, wearing a baseball uniform and spiked shoes!

"As an outfielder," Deacon Phillippe said, "I've never seen such a powerful arm! He played the outfield better than Cobb, Ruth, or Speaker. If he had stayed out there, he would have passed all of them as a hitter."

This is the most argued question among the ancient heads in baseball and many maintain that the energy Honus burned up playing shortstop had a telling effect on his work at the plate. The Wagner worshippers firmly believe that he would have wound up with a better than .400 lifetime average if he had stayed in the garden.

Tommy Leach is one who thinks so and Leach should know. When switched from third base to the outfield, Leach's comment on what a soft touch it was to roam the pastures is a baseball classic. "A guy who plays out here ought to pay to get in the park," Tommy drawled after his first game in the outfield.

"You could drop Honus Wagner in any position and he'd put you up a star game," the Deacon said. "There has never been a ballplayer so versatile. We used to say that Honus can hit anything, steal a base whenever he feels like it, and throw as far as he wants to! This kid Stan Musial comes the closest to being the sort of all-round ballplayer Honus Wagner was, but Musial can't run the bases like Hans could or play the infield."

During one season in the early 1900's, the old Pirates saw Honus play every position on the diamond except catcher. The cagey Clarke had marvelous judgment when it came to realizing Wagner's magnificent abilities. He called on him to do the freak, the unbelievable, and his chunky charge never failed him. One day in Boston, with a man on third and one out, Clarke trotted in from left field and told Honus to switch positions with him.

"If that geezer hits a fly ball," Clarke ordered, "throw to the plate and get the man from third."

The Boston batter hit a liner to deep left and it seemed to those watching that day that the ball came back to the plate with more speed than it had traveled out to Hans. His throw caught the runner by a foot and it hit the catcher's mitt almost dead center over the dish!

Chasing a fly ball, the bandy-legged Wagner looked like a fullback seeking a hole through tackle. As the ball began to drop, Honus, throwing out his basketlike hands, would begin to stretch and s-t-r-e-t-c-h and then the ball would be in his glove. Such an exhibition today might bring gales of laughter from the stands, until some wise one pointed out how much ground had been covered.

At shortstop, there was only one type of hit that ever gave him trouble. A slow, weak, bobbling ball that any high school kid could field would, at times, mess him up. He would charge at it in high dudgeon, as though ashamed to be called upon to pick up such a fizzle. But he loved the zinging tough ones, the sizzling, white streaks that had to be knocked down with a bare hand or that called for an extra burst of superhuman speed, split-second timing, and plain guts.

The question of Wagner's courage as a ballplayer never arose during his entire career. He was spiked and bounced around innumerable times, but nobody ever spoke or wrote about it because Honus never considered a husky bruise or a slashed leg important enough to mention. The peaceful brown eyes scarcely changed expression as pain shot through his body after a tangle with the burly base runners.

Wagner's first meeting with Ty Cobb on the base paths has been written hundreds of times, but rarely from the Pirate player's viewpoint. That day, as the story goes, Cobb got on first, cupped his hands, and shouted, "Hey, Kraut-head, I'm comin' down on the next pitch." This was followed by several more profane threats.

"I guess Ty didn't hear what I said that day," Honus grinned. "I didn't say it very loud. I just said that I'd be around."

He was around. As the spikes of Cobb reached for his shins, the ball crashed into Ty's mouth to the tune of three stitches.

"I always liked Ty," Honus said, almost wistfully. "He was a fighter and he knew it was a fellah's duty to protect himself out there. Lots of 'em had trouble with Ty, but I never did."

Cobb's remarks about Honus Wagner generally ran like this: "That goddam Dutchman is the only man in the game I can't scare."

When he walked off the diamond, Honus was the first man dressed, quickly removing himself from the vicinity of baseball bugs. He was quiet and shy in his early days as a star. Whenever he was asked to talk about himself, he suffered. His silent manner was never interpreted by fans, players, or newspapermen as aloofness. They respected his reticent nature. His marks of distinction were work-worn hands and the common beauty of a plain, rugged, honest and friendly face.

He was fearless but without enemies, and every ballplayer called him brother.

Wagner's closest friends were Claude Ritchey, the Pirate second-baseman, and Deacon Phillippe. "And next to us," Phillippe said, "he was most at ease with the rookies. At the start of every season you would generally see Honus with some kid he had picked up and was helping to become a ballplayer."

No one is so chock full of Wagner lore as the Deacon. This 77-year-old man was quite a piece of pitcher in his day. Before coming to the Pirates with Wagner in the Pittsburgh-Louisville merger of 1900, he pitched a no-hit game against the Giants (7-0, May 25, 1899) winning 22 games that year for a club that did not play .500 ball. He also distinguished himself by defeating the Red Sox three times in the first four games of the 1903 World Series and is the only hurler who ever pitched five complete games in one Series. He played on the Pirates with Honus for 13 years.

"Hans would never cash in on the greatness of his name," Phillippe said. "Many times one of us would arrange for him to meet a prominent businessman. He would show up, stand around for a few minutes, and then say, 'Well, I got to meet a fellow down the street.' He couldn't seem to cotton to those who could have done him some good. But he would take a bunch of working stiffs or poor kids, load them in his car and take them out on a hunting and fishing trip, foot all the bills, and never mention it."

The Flying Dutchman, the most valuable team player of his era, was also the most underpaid of the great stars. His first year at Pittsburgh, hitting .381, he collected \$350 a month. At his height, he got \$600 a month during the playing season. He was then boosted to a yearly salary of \$5000 and finally wound up getting \$10,000 his last few years.

Once Larry Lajoie and Ty Cobb approached Honus to go on a vaudeville tour with them, offering him \$1000 a week. All he had to do was stand on the stage and swing a bat. Honus turned it down, saying, "Aw, Ty, you know I'm no actor." Cobb got furious and tried to talk him into it. He couldn't understand anyone turning down all that money.

Businessmen, advertising agencies, and other commercial people of-

fered Honus fantastic sums of money which he refused to take. A tobacco company once asked John Gruber, a scorer at Pittsburgh, to obtain Wagner's picture to put in their cigarette packages. The letter Gruber got back from Honus is now in a frame. It reads, "Dear John, I don't want my picture in cigarettes, but I don't want you to lose \$10, so enclosed is a check for that sum."

According to Phillippe, Honus did not learn to become any sort of mixer until quite recently, within the last 10 years or so. Now, he will occasionally agree to speak at a banquet. He invariably steals the show with his quiet, devastating humor and wonderful stories about baseball, hunting, and fishing. Most of Wagner's stories about other people, some of them beauts, concern the Deacon.

"Never forget the time Clarke told the Deac to dust off a batter," Honus grinned. "The Deacon got into a huff and he tells Fred that any time he had to throw at a guy's head to get him out, he was gonna quit pitchin'."

Honus and the Deacon are still playing a pinochle game that started back in a church in Thomasville, Georgia, in 1900. Phillippe contacted a form of poison ivy that Spring and the ball club quarantined him in the church, the only available place. None of the other ballplayers would go near him, but Honus moved in and stayed with him.

"He took care of me better'n a nurse," Phillippe said. "Three times a day he smeared me with some black ointment. He got the poison ivy on his hands doin' it, but he kept right on playin' ball with his hands all swole up and nobody but me knew he had it."

Out on the mound, with the Dutchman behind him at short, the Deacon said he felt like he had 10 men between second and third. With a man on base, Honus was the only shortstop in the league who would stay in position until the ball was hit and still have enough speed to get over and cover the bag. "He was as good a catcher with one hand as the other," Phillippe said. "He made so many outstanding stops you can't remember any single one."

The only time Wagner made errors on the field was when he would get mad and these occasions were extremely rare. The irascible McGraw and his arrogant Giants were sometimes able to get Honus' goat. His lips would tighten, he would become more silent than ever and try too hard. Like all great players, he burned with an unquenchable desire to win at all costs.

"McGraw could get my dander up once in a while," Honus admitted. "In 1900 I was in a hot race for the batting championship with Mike Donlin, Cy Seymour, and Elmer Flick. We played our last game against the Giants, and a hit that day would cinch it for me. I caught hold of one and sent it down the third-base line for a two-bagger and John began to scream 'Foul!' just about the time the bat hit the ball. He knew it

would be fair," Honus grinned, "the old devil just wanted to worry me. Well, I sure liked him, anyway."

Honus remembers with glee how he once outsmarted McGraw. It was one of the few times anyone ever pulled a fast one on the doughty, managerial genius of the Giants. The Pirates were playing the New York team at the old Exposition Park. With a runner on second, Hans signaled the catcher for a throw to catch him off the bag. McGraw caught the signal and when the throw came to second the runner dashed for third and was safe.

"I knew McGraw was on to my signal," Hans related, "so before the next game I had a talk with the catcher. This time I flashed the same signal, the catcher faked the throw to second and tossed it to third catching the runner by three feet."

In his usual gracious manner, the angry McGraw grabbed Honus after the game and said, "For a Dutchman, you're a pretty smart son of a bitch, at that!" In later years, Honus told John J. McGraw that it was just about the nicest thing that had ever been said to him. McGraw smiled and said that was just how he had meant it.

If Honus Wagner had played for the Giants, he undoubtedly would have been paid twice the sum he was getting at Pittsburgh. But no man loved the Pirates and the people of the Smoky City as much as Wagner did. When the ball club went into the red, he took voluntary pay cuts. He lived his whole life within walking distance of the ball park.

When Ban Johnson raided the National League to form the American League, Wagner was offered \$21,000 a year to make the switch. Hans didn't hesitate. He went to Barney Dreyfuss at the start of the season and signed his name to a Pirate contract—and the sum he was to get had not yet been filled in!

To Honus, money and ball playing were poles apart. You could not put a price on what it meant to him, in the way of pride, to be a Pirate. There was a reason, one that goes back to his childhood, a simple reason for a wonderfully simple, deeply sentimental man.

"When I was a kid in Carnegie," he said, "I used to walk to Pittsburgh to see the Pirates play. It was a long walk, over the hills, seven miles each way. I was only 10 years old then and it used to seem that I'd never get to that ball park in time."

Dusk would have merged into night before the kid, Hans, would get back to his home in Carnegie. Perhaps, that day, the sparkling play of Cap Anson and his White Stockings had whipped the Pirates. Hans would be dreaming, as he walked along, how it would be to wear a Pirate uniform and play against Cap.

Later, he was to find out. Later, he was to play against the renowned Cap Anson, the first baseball star in the game. And Cap was to tell him, "Kid, you're a better hitter now than I ever was." He would never forget

those words, telling them to a reporter in 1948, more than half a century later.

Baseball seems almost like a new game when you talk to Honus Wagner, when you see him in the dressing room swapping yarns with a Pirate rookie of 20 summers, when you realize that he actually talked with and played against Anson, who practically invented the game.

John Peter Wagner was born in Mansfield (now Carnegie), Pennsylvania, on February 24, 1874. He was the son of Catherine and Peter Wagner. His father was an immigrant from Bavaria, fleeing from the harshness of the Prussian military system.

He fled, but the training stuck. Hans remembers how his father would drill the neighborhood kids in the streets of Mansfield. Peter Wagner left the harsh life for one almost as harsh, toiling in the coal mines 18 hours a day to support his family of nine children.

"I remember only six of us kids," Honus said. "The other three died before I was born or while I was very young."

The things Hans remembers about his father as a young man are not many but they are vivid. He remembers that he could run very fast. He remembers that he was frequently despondent, suffering moods of deep despair. He remembers his father and darkness, descending into a coal mine with him to begin work. He remembers the quiet, reassuring voice of his father as they sunk deeper into the bowels of the earth.

"It was Spring when I went to the mines to work and I was 12 years old," Honus said. "They gave me what they called a 'boy's car.' My father didn't want me to work but we needed the money. I loaded two tons of coal a day at 79 cents a ton, boy's pay."

At 14, Honus was taking a man's turn at the cars. He worked in the mines off and on for five years. During most of the Winter, he never saw daylight. The Wagner family—father, Honus, and his brothers—would go to the mines before dawn broke. When they came out it was dark. Hans was small then, and he could dig coal in places men could not go.

"It didn't make me stronger to work in the mines," he said. "I think it hurt me a lot. The dampness of the mines never left my legs. Some years I felt a lot of pain playing on them. But I ate plenty," he smiled. "I had to eat to stay alive."

The air was so foul in the mine that water would spoil, so the miners drank tea. And young Hans learned to like rats, to depend on them for his life. The rats could always sense a cave-in and when they ran for their lives, the miners ran with them. The sound of the rats trying to gnaw through to the food in the tin lunch pails was a reassuring sound to the boy, Hans.

Now, at important dinners and banquets, Honus never tells these things to assembled guests in their sparkling shirt fronts. He tells them

about a certain mule that worked the mines with them. "Smartest darn mule I ever have known," he says. "During lunch hour he would ride up on the lift alone and go to grazing. Never had to go after him. Soon as a half hour was up, he'd come back to the lift and ride down again. Why, that mule was so smart that he never showed up for work on Sundays and holidays!"

Honus liked the Spring of the year best, for his older brothers would bring a ball and glove to the mine. At lunch time, they would often go up above ground and play catch. He would play with them until time to return to work. His brothers, Al, Luke, and Charlie, were all ball-players. Ever since he can remember, Honus wanted to be a ballplayer too.

The Wagner boys played their baseball on Sunday in a vacant lot on Main Street where the bank now stands. It was his brother, Al, who gave Honus the best piece of baseball advice in his entire career. Hans had confided to him how much he wanted to be a ballplayer and Al said, "You practice all the positions, Johnny. That way you'll always be needed."

Honus did just that. In pick-up games with the sons of miners and steel workers, he would stubbornly insist on playing at least three or four different positions during the course of a game. "By the time I was 14," he said, "I had learned them all. The way I used to throw at short for the Pirates, that way of throwin' without takin' a step after catching a ball hit far to my right, I learned when I was playing as a kid in Carnegie."

When Honus was 16 years old, one of the Wagners had gone up in the world. Brother Charlie saved enough money to buy a small barbershop. Charlie hoisted his kid brother out of the mines and put him to work learning the cleaner and more lucrative trade of barbering. The sights in the upper world, the shouting kids on their way to the lots to play ball, made life even more miserable for Hans. One Saturday afternoon, the gang shouted at Hans as they went by the barbershop. He dropped the shears and fished his glove out from under the chair.

"Where you goin'?"

"I'm gonna play ball, Charlie."

"No, you ain't!"

But Honus—who could run like his father—was out of the shop before Charlie could catch him. The conflict between Honus and Charlie became sharper, and the hours Hans spent at barbering grew shorter. He drifted to other jobs. He spent more time on ball fields, then lived on little or nothing playing semi-pro ball in nearby Ohio. Al, who had turned pro, encouraged him. Then Luke became a ballplayer.

Honus was working in the Superior steel mills when he got his first offer to play professional baseball. He was just 20 years old. Al, playing

for the crack Steubenville team in the Tri-State League, had raved about Honus to his manager, George Moreland. Moreland needed an outfielder, and he wired Hans an offer of \$35 per month.

Wild with excitement, Hans rushed to the railroad station and showed the telegram to a friend named Joe Chambers, a railroad worker. Together, over a penny postcard, they framed a reply. It read. "All right. When do you want me? John Peter Wagner."

A few days later a contract arrived, along with another wire telling Honus to come immediately. Hans signed the contract, with Joe Chambers affixing his signature as witness. If you ever pass through Carnegie, you'll see that contract in a store window there. Hans sent another penny postcard. "On my way. John Peter Wagner." He was broke, so Chambers put him aboard a coal train that would pass through Steubenville.

"When I got there, I was covered with coal dust and cinders," Honus chuckled. "I was ashamed to show up before Moreland that way, so I went down to the river and washed my clothes and took a bath. When my things had dried, I went to the ball park and reported."

This was the clean, humble beginning of the longest career in baseball.

Out of his 35 bucks a month, Hans had to buy his baseball uniform, his spiked shoes, and his glove. The first time Moreland saw the younger Wagner throw a ball he said, "Hell, son, you're no outfielder, you're a pitcher."

As a moundsman, Wagner had blinding speed but nothing else. The batters who could connect with his fast one gave it a terrific ride. Moreland kept moving him around, playing him in both the outfield and the infield. It didn't matter where he put him, and he didn't pay too much attention to his fielding. What interested Moreland was the way Honus could hit. He had a mere .402 average at the plate that year.

The manager of the Warren team heard about Hans and offered him \$75 a month. It was a huge leap in salary for those days and Honus grabbed it. When he arrived, the manager asked him what position he played.

"What do you need?" Honus asked, politely.

"A shortstop," the manager said.

"That's what I play," the youngster said.

That hawk-eyed, unerring judge of ballplayers, Ed Barrow, saw Honus play one game and immediately began to dicker for Honus. Manager Moreland, who still held Wagner's contract, thought that Barrow was after Al. He wired to Barrow on the Paterson, New Jersey, club that Al Wagner was not for sale. "How about the other one?" Barrow wired back. Moreland agreed to let Honus go for some \$300 on the barrelhead.

Through 1896 and part of 1897, Wagner roamed through almost all the positions on the Paterson ball club. He started at first base. When the third-baseman got hurt, he took over the position and then was switched to the outfield. Barrow, anxious to see him get ahead, urged Louisville of the then 12-club National League to take Honus. "Take him for anything. Take him as a gift."

They took him, dubiously, for \$800. What a gift!

It was at Louisville that he met and played for manager Fred Clarke, the man he was to play under for two decades. Clarke put him in the outfield, because he happened to need an outfielder. Al's words were prophetic—*Learn to play all the positions, Johnny, and you'll always be needed.*

At Louisville, Clarke soon realized that Honus could be used anywhere he was needed. He shuttled him between first, third, and left, center, and right field. In 61 games during his first season in the major leagues, Wagner hit .344. He played his first big-league game on July 19, 1897, and it was one of the busiest of his career. Louisville's opponents for that day were the Baltimore Orioles, sparked by Muggsy McGraw!

"My first time up," Honus, of the remarkable memory, said, "I got a single. The next time I hit a good one. I might have made a triple but Jack Doyle gave me the hip at first, Ol' Hughie Jennings chased me wide around second, and McGraw blocked me off at third and knocked the wind outa me putting the ball in my belly."

When Hans came into the bench, Clarke was in a fury.

"Lissen," he screamed, "those are Orioles! Let 'em play with you like that and you go back to the minors!"

Late in the game, the young Flying Dutchman tied into another one and sent it deep and skimming into center. He dumped Doyle on his behind at first, left Jennings sprawled in the dirt on second, and tramped all over McGraw at third. Clarke strolled out to the third-base coaching line.

"I guess you plan to stay with us awhile," he grinned. Then he turned to McGraw. "Nice day, ain't it, Muggsy?"

While playing for Louisville in the outfield, Wagner frequently nipped runners going from first to third on a long hit. The first time he did it, he was called up before the board of directors of the Colonels ball club.

"Why did you throw to third?" they demanded. "You're supposed to play it safe and throw home."

"I got the man out," Honus said, quietly, "and it broke up the rally."

"You were lucky. It's not good baseball."

When Wagner did it twice the next day, throwing the runner out at third each time, the boys in the front office clammed up. They had seen

in action the difference between "good baseball" and genius on the wing. And it was while he was playing with Louisville that rival outfielders began showing respect for Wagner's terrific clouting, playing him with their backs pressed right against the fence.

When young Honus Wagner learned that he, Fred Clarke, and 12 other players were to be shipped to the Pittsburgh Pirates it was, unquestionably, the happiest day in his life. All week, before it was finally settled, Hans had been fretting about the rumor that the "gang" would be traded to Chicago. When Clarke walked in and told him that he was a Pirate, Wagner's eyes got cloudy and he almost broke his jaw smiling. "Fred, I aim to stay a Pirate all my life," he said. "It's where I belong."

With the familiar feel and smell of the Pittsburgh smog around him, within hiking distance of home, with enthusiasm and simple joy in his heart, Honus played like a fiend during his first eight years on the Buccaneer ball club. Beginning in 1901, the Pirates copped three straight pennants and the batting average of their beloved Dutchman read like this: .381, .352, .329, .355, .349, .363, .339, .350.

Ranking with the Yankees Murderers Row, the Pirates of 1902 had three outfielders all hitting over .300 with Honus setting the pace. Honus loves to roll the names of those 1902 players over his tongue and tell about them. There were Beaumont, Sebring, Clarke, outfielders; Claude Ritchey, Kitty Bransfield, Tommy Leach, Wagner (infield and outfield) and Chief Zimmer and Jack O'Connor behind the plate. And on the mound, Tannehill, Doheny, Phillippe, Leever and Chesbro.

"That was the year we finished 27 games ahead of the league," Wagner beamed. "That was some ball club. Long about the middle of August, nothin' could slow us down. We could've won the pennant with each man holdin' a couple of bags of peanuts in his hand and his glove in his hip pocket."

It might have been done at that. As both Deacon Phillippe and Wagner said, each one managed his own position and didn't want to be bothered. In the middle of the season, Clarke took sick and went off and left Wagner in charge. Honus would amble into the dressing room, look over the pitching staff, and say, "Who wants to throw 'em today?" If anyone would ask Honus a question about strategy or tactics, Hans would shrug and say, "Let's just beat 'em."

It was always inconceivable to Honus, whose baseball instinct was so natural, that anyone had to be told how to play baseball. Nobody had ever told him. You caught the ball and threw it where it was supposed to go. You thought of the right thing to do instinctively.

"Honus couldn't tell another ballplayer how to play," Deacon Phillippe said. "And in my day," he added proudly, "a fellah wasn't considered a ballplayer unless he could make his own decisions. We needed Clarke as an outfielder and didn't give two hoots for a manager."

Unlike most fiercely competitive athletes, Honus never fought with the umpires. He has an inherent sense of fair play. As he put it, "In all my years of play, I never saw an ump deliberately make an unfair decision. They really called them as they saw 'em." If Wagner felt that an umpire had erred on calling a third strike, he would turn away from the plate without a word. The next time up, he would say, quietly, "Bill, that last one you called looked a little outside to me." The umpires would bend over backward to make it up to him.

Those who watched the Flying Dutchman for so many years, watched breathlessly as he dived about the diamond making those impossible saves and slid into bases at breakneck speed, could not understand how he kept from getting seriously hurt. Wagner's answer is simple and humorous. "I kept pretty wide awake out there and I liked to play too much to get hurt."

Honus was only seriously injured once and it was one of the most freakish happenings in baseball. He had run behind second base to grab a high bouncer and thrown the man out at first. The play was over and he strolled in toward the pitcher. His foot hit the bag and he tripped and broke his ankle!

With the exception of part-time duty at first base, third, and the outfield, Wagner played shortstop for the Pirates for 15 years. It got so he hated to leave the position, even when Clarke needed his talent elsewhere, because he loved playing that hot spot so much. It was there he got the most action and covered the most ground.

From the stands, old Peter Wagner spent many long, Summer afternoons watching Honus break up ball games. When it had become too hard on him in the mines, Hans had got his father a job as a ticket-taker at the ball park. Everything was much brighter for the old man in his waning years. Three of his sons had become big-league ballplayers, and Charlie's barbershop was almost a shrine to the proud, working people of Carnegie.

Honus was at his best during the years 1900 to 1909. In '09 he drove in the Pirates' winning run to beat the Giants and cinch the National League pennant. In the World Series that year, he hit the pinnacle of his brilliant career, batting .333, making 13 putouts at shortstop, and stealing six bases to tie the Series record in that department. He was 34 years old then and, almost single-handed, he tamed the terrible Ty and the entire Detroit team.

"Things were changing fast by that time," Honus said. "Women were beginning to come to the ball parks. We hadda stop cussin'. I remember Clarke's wife bawlin' the devil outa him in '09 for the language he was using as he'd come in from the outfield to squawk about some decision."

In the year 1909, the Pirates moved from the old Exposition Park down near the river to beautiful Forbes Field in green, rolling country.

Everything was new and bright and shiny except Ol' Honus, whose legs were beginning to bother him. The years in the mines, the years playing on the wet, soggy ball ground at Exposition, seemed finally to have caught up with the Flying Dutchman. At the end of the 1909 season, he said he was through.

The Honus Wagner All-Star Basketball team had kept him busy and in shape during the off season, and he planned to devote his time to that. He was a star of that team, playing basketball the way he played baseball, turning in a magnificent performance at every position. His team had won the Western Pennsylvania and Ohio championship that year, winning one of the play-off games by a 5-4 score! "Yep," Honus laughed, "basketball has changed some, too."

Just before the start of Spring training in 1910, owner Barney Dreyfuss and manager Clarke got together with Honus for a friendly chat. They began to talk over baseball, past teams, great plays, old times. Then Barney said the one thing that would bring the old warhorse back, the plea that could not be refused.

"We need you, Honus."

"Well," Wagner said, lifting a handkerchief to his big beak, "I guess if you fellows need me I'd better hang around for awhile."

"Fine!" Barney Dreyfuss said. "Name any price you want, Honus."

"Oh, just fill in the usual amount," Wagner said, heading for the door.

He stayed around for eight more seasons. In 1910, being needed, he hit .320 and tied for the most hits in the league. Being needed even more in 1911, Honus won the National League batting championship again, clouting .334. He complained of rheumatism that year. He couldn't seem to pull off that stunt of leading the league in doubles and triples. He was still up to his old tricks, however, still rounding first like a fire truck and causing anxious outfielders to bobble the ball. But now he had to come in sliding on 36-year-old legs instead of breezing in serene and upright.

In 1913, while playing a game in Brooklyn, the news reached Honus that his father had died. He played out the game, dressed slowly and quietly and, for once, was the last man to leave the ball park. The streets of Brooklyn were like another country that afternoon and he seemed like an alien, belonging to a faraway time, to dark mornings and the voice of his father, to toil and the mines.

Fall came, smoke hung heavy over the suburbs of Pittsburgh. In between tuning up for basketball, Hans would go hunting in the woods around Carnegie with Deacon Phillippe. They would wander 25 or 30 miles a day over hilly land and Honus would complain about not having the pep he had in younger days, feeling a little tuckered out now at the end of the day. "Guess I'll have to knock it off next year," he said to the

Deacon after the 1913 season when his batting average for that year had slipped to a measly .300 for the first time in his life.

But he was back for full seasons in 1914, '15, and '16. Fred Clarke, the last of the old gang, had left in 1915 and at the start of the 1916 season Hans was switched to first base. He got lonely for action as a first-sacker and so they sent him back to shortstop. He hit .287 that year and had a fielding average of .954.

Early in the 1917 season, Barney Dreyfuss knew what was coming. He tried to make it easier for Honus by appointing him manager. He replaced Jimmy Callahan on July 1 and quit on July 4th in favor of Hugo Bezdek. He had no desire or talent for managing and was glad when he could go back to short and play his own game his own way.

"I never wanted the responsibility of managing," he said. "I liked to give 'em the best I had and be through for the day."

His face was a little sad when he said it, as though he had let someone down by not being able to perform as wonderfully as a manager as he had as a ballplayer. Then his face brightened suddenly and he leaned back and relaxed.

"Reminds me of a story," he said. "Sort of shows how tough being a manager is. I remember one day we dropped a close one to the Cards. It was during the time Bill McKechnie was manager and he was a very nervous fellow. After the game, Sam Waters took him to the opera to get his mind off of what had happened that afternoon. In the middle of the second act, Bill sits up straight in his seat and yells, 'Dammit, why didn't that dumb cuss slide?' They run 'em both outa the opera house!"

On August 22, 1917, the Pirates were playing Brooklyn. It was getting very dark on the field and the game was tied in the 21st inning when a Brooklyn batter rapped a mean grounder deep between second and third for what seemed like a sure bingo and the end of the game. The fans peering through the dusk saw an awkward, bow-legged, squat giant hurtle meteorlike toward the ball, scoop it up in a bare paw, and flip it to first in time to catch the runner.

A roar went up. Honus Wagner was still in the game. He was then 43 years old and had been playing as a regular all year. They had started him off at first, then sent him to third. But when the chips were down in a game like this, he was at short—still the best shortstop in the National League.

The game dragged on until the 24th inning and the Brooks finally won, 6-5. But ballplayers and fans and sportswriters went home that night talking about the beautiful way Ol' Honus had grabbed that impossible sizzler in his right hand, and how they guessed the Dutchman would still be flying around the diamond when they were all in their graves.

It was then less than a month from the time Honus Wagner, short-

stop, was to play his last major-league game. He played it on September 17, 1917. Then he went home to rest, but he carried his spiked shoes with him, just in case.

The house atop the hill in Carnegie was now cluttered with trophies. There was even a baseball bat given to him by Admiral Peary, made from the wood in the deck of the Admiral's flagship. But trophies, as nice as they are, are cold objects that could never replace for him a chew of tobacco, a yarn in the clubhouse, the feeling in the pit of the stomach as you walk to the plate.

Honus turned down all the lucrative business propositions offered to him and took a job as a basketball and baseball coach at Carnegie Tech. It didn't last long. He wasn't built to tell others how to be great. That summer he organized a baseball team of his own—the Honus Wagner All-Stars, same name and same kind of scrappy outfit as the All-Star Basketball team he still played with and loved.

The shortstop for the All-Stars was a 44-year-old big-leaguer. He played with that team every Summer, all Summer, for another 10 years! He actually quit playing organized baseball at the age of 53! Money during this time was always a problem. It was as though he was a kid out of the coal mines again, playing for \$35 a month.

Now and then someone in Pittsburgh would get teary-eyed talking about what a great ballplayer he had been, and they would toss him an honorary banquet with speeches and a check. He was a married man with kids now and he did need the dough. It took money to keep the All-Stars going.

Honus had married on December 30, 1916, the year before he bowed out of big-league competition. He married a Pittsburgh girl, Bessie B. Smith. He was 42 years old when he decided to take the leap. His explanation of why he had not married sooner was, "Would have, but I was too busy playing ball."

The Deacon says this is only partly true, that Honus was too shy and unassuming to feel confident around the opposite sex until he passed 40. He has two fine daughters now, both of whom adore him. The younger one, Virginia, is writing a book about her father called "My Dad."

But Hans himself is still reticent when it comes to talking about anything except baseball.

"Tell you about my wife?" he said. "Well, now, her father was a mighty fine pitcher. As a kid, I used to watch him play. Had one of the sweetest curve balls I ever saw in my life. Lemme see, I met her with her father one day on a street car comin' home from a ball game. Say, that old boy could throw a burner in there, too. Had a very fast ball. His name was John Corbett Smith. Should have gone up to the big leagues."

For Honus Wagner everything was and is and always will be colored by baseball and baseball players.

When times got tough, he served for a while as a sergeant-at-arms in the Pennsylvania State Legislature. But he couldn't stand it. He said it was a lazy man's job. He said he would rather go back to the mines.

The first business venture of his life was a sporting goods store. He went into partnership with Pie Traynor, but the depression licked both the old ballplayers and the business went down the drain. Honus was almost glad to get rid of it.

In 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt took over in the White House and people across the nation first heard about the New Deal. That year, Honus Wagner got a New Deal, too. He was taken back to the bosom of his old ball club as a coach. He was just turning 60 and the new job with the Pirates made him feel spryer than ever. At Spring training, he chased about like a rookie.

He has been a coach for the Pirates ever since. Until a couple of years ago, he danced around on his old legs during batting practice before the games, retrieving balls. "It was a miracle how he kept from getting hit," Jim Long said. "Then, one day, it happened. A foul struck him on the back and since then he's had to keep off the diamond when practice gets too heavy. He doesn't like that."

You will find in Pittsburgh some cold, hard heads that will tell you that Honus Wagner's value as a coach for the Pirates is nil, that he is kept on merely out of sentiment. But the men who play on the ball club don't feel that way. "It wouldn't be a Pirate dressing room without him," Frankie Gustine said.

Now that Gustine has been traded to the Cubs, he will miss Ol' Honus more than any other player on the Pirate roster. Frankie has been seeing him every day of the baseball season for eight years.

"He is the most modest of all the great ballplayers of the past," Gustine said. "I never saw him play—I wasn't even alive when he was playing—but, just being around him, you get the *feel* of how great he must have been. They ought to erect a monument to that guy."

Monuments are for the dead. Honus Wagner is still very much alive. In the Pirate dugout, a mouth full of tobacco, the keen, brown eyes studying the field, he is a living monument, most inspiring to behold.

The smart rookies still come to him for advice. He seldom gives it to them in words. Instead, he *shows* them. He spits into a glove and crouches over and swings a long, heavy right arm, showing them how to throw from deep short without taking a step. "There ain't much to being a ballplayer," he'll say, "if you're a ballplayer."

The things he has told Frankie Gustine over the years are few and simple. Such advice as, "Keep in good shape all year around. That playin' basketball in the off season did me a whale of a lot of good."

(Frankie got himself a basketball team.) "It's gettin' back into shape for the baseball season that takes it outa most fellahs."

"Stay up there and hit," he'll add. "You can't swing at that ball often enough. Make 'em drive you away from the plate during practice. That's what I did. An' take your own part out there. Be fulla spunk."

Young ballplayers like him because he does not brag about the old days, or tell them how much greater the oldtime stars were than modern athletes. He knows the game has become more scientific and he says so. He does not live in the past, nor boast that if he could have hit against the "live" ball he would have had a homer every time he hit a double. He tells you how the game differs, how much more fight there was in the old days, by spinning a yarn.

"When I was with Louisville," he'll say, "we used to have some tough scraps with the Cleveland Spiders. They was beatin' us one afternoon and ol' Clarke was razzin' the umpire and yelling that the game ought to be called on account of darkness. He stormed and pranced around Ump Weedon so much that Weedon finally called the game. Then there was a regular riot and the Spiders began swingin' their fists and they took the whole lot of 'em off to the police station."

He pauses to shake with laughter. "The next day they come up for a hearin'. Clarke is sittin' on a corner of the courtroom a-laughin' up his sleeve at the Cleveland team a-standin' in front of the Judge. Then Pat Tebeau begins makin' a fiery speech to the judge and he suddenly turns around and points at Clarke and says, 'Clarke is the man who started all this by steppin' on umpire Weedon's toes. He's the one that ought to be arrested.' Well, sir, ol' Clarke didn't wait to hear no more, he just lit outa that room on the dead run!"

You can't write a story about Honus Wagner without asking him to pick an all-time, all-star team. The one he picked is the only all-star team since 1900 that hasn't got Wagner at shortstop. For Honus, the greatest outfielders he has ever seen are Clarence Beaumont in center field, Fred Clarke in left field, and Wee Willie Keeler in right. In the infield, Bill Terry at first base, Rogers Hornsby at second.

"Shortstop?" he grinned. "That's a tough one for me. I guess it's a tossup between Joe Tinker and Hughie Jennings. At third, Pie Traynor and behind the plate either Roger Bresnahan or Johnny Kling. For pitchers, well Christy Mathewson was the best and then ol' Grover Alexander and Rube Waddell."

When the baseball season starts, Honus seems to become ageless. The only thing that tires him out is the endless questions put to him by the throngs of admirers who cluster around him and want to know the "inside" of how it was in the old days. When the talk begins to tire his tongue, Honus has a graceful way of removing his ungraceful, bow-legged form.

"Now I'll ask you folks a question," he grins. "The bases are full and there are no outs and the batter hits a homer over the left-field wall, but not a man scores."

While the crowd is trying to figure that one out, Honus ambles out of sight. The teaser kept Bing Crosby awake most of one night and he cornered Honus the next day and demanded the answer.

"A fellah like you with four sons ought to be able to figure that one out," Honus said, straight-faced. "It was a girl's team, Bing."

Last year at Spring training in Gilmore Stadium, Hollywood, the photographers followed Honus from morning until night. He posed, uncomplainingly, for countless pictures. After three weeks of it, he sidled up to manager Billy Meyer one day and said, "Bill, those photographers have wore me out and I'd like to go home for a rest."

He went home to his house in Carnegie, to the town where he has always lived. The people there were surprised to see their ballplayer at home during the height of Spring training. It hadn't happened in 55 years and it worried them. Seeing Honus out of uniform at that time of year almost shook their faith in the indestructibility of the Flying Dutchman.

But when the ump called "Play ball!" on the opening day at Forbes Field, the Dutchman was there in full baseball regalia, sitting happily in the Pirate dugout, his eyes on the pitcher. He'll be in the same spot this year and the next and, in the way that the Babe has never left Yankee Stadium, Honus Wagner will be wherever the Pirates are playing, forever.

TY COBB

The Georgia Peach

By Jack Sher

THIS is the story of the greatest ballplayer of all time.

He made his first appearance in a major-league ball park on August 30, 1905, at Bennett Field in the city of Detroit. His name was not even on the score card. He arrived at the plate unknown, a pinch-hitter, an angry-faced, jut-jawed, mean-eyed 18-year-old kid who held his bat like a club, left hand high, right hand low. Facing him was Jack Chesbro, New York's great spitballer, winner of 41 games the previous season. The rookie batter twisted his mouth scornfully, taunted Chesbro with a few derisive words, then whacked out a double, driving in two runs.

That hit began the career of baseball's most fabulous performer, the player of the century, the "Georgia Peach," the tyrant of the Tigers, Tyrus Raymond Cobb. Twenty-three years later, when Ty Cobb finally hung up his spikes, he had played in more ball games, scored more runs, made more hits, stolen more bases, held more records than any other man in baseball history. He was, in truth, a colossus of the diamond.

The world has changed drastically since that day in 1905 when Ty first came to bat. Teddy Roosevelt was President then, the Russo-Japanese war had just ended, the Panama Canal was a dream of stubborn men clearing malaria-infested swamps, the national debt stood at \$1,132,357,095, and the "horseless carriage" was being banned from Detroit streets. Then everything changed—but Ty Cobb was still playing baseball when the sight of an airplane over a ball park was a common thing. Everything has changed, but the Georgia Peach still holds more baseball records than any man who ever played the game. Well into his sixties, he has yet to see *any* of them broken.

Old-timer Ray Schalk, one of the great catchers for the Chicago White Sox, said, "I don't blame any young ballplayer who looks at the records Cobb set and refuses to believe them. If I hadn't played against that devil, I wouldn't believe them myself. Most of the time it was hard to believe the things you actually saw him do."

Playing in 3,033 games, Cobb made 4,191 hits, scored 2,244 runs. His closest competitor in hits, Tris Speaker, was 676 behind him. Babe Ruth scored 70 less runs than Cobb. Ty's lifetime batting average of .367 was the highest ever compiled by any batter. Three times in his career he finished the season with an average better than .400. He won the American League batting crown 12 times. One year he even finished first in home runs. His average was .323 in 1928, his last year of baseball—when he was almost 42 years old! He stole a grand total of 892 bases and holds the modern record for one season, 96 in 1915. Cobb had been playing major-league ball 10 years when he racked up the 96 thefts, more than most entire ball clubs now steal in a season.

It is understandable that when Baseball's Hall of Fame was completed in Cooperstown in 1939, the first memento to be hung in the museum was a pair of shoes with gleaming spikes. "That takes care of Ty Cobb," the judges said. "Now let's see who else belongs in the Hall."

In 1942, a poll was taken among big-league managers, ex-managers, and the stars of the century to choose who was the greatest ballplayer of all time. Of the 102 votes cast, Ty Cobb got 60, with the remaining 42 divided among 14 players. The bow-legged, immortal Hans Wagner finished second with 17, Babe Ruth won 11 votes, and Rogers Hornsby was the only other player to get more than one vote.

These figures move into the realm of the unbelievable when you consider that Ty Cobb was the most hated and the most feared player of his, or any, era. He was a fiery, unpredictable, bull-headed, daring, cruel, and brilliant performer. He was a lone wolf, fierce, combative, despised by many of his own teammates, always a center of storm and strife, one of God's angry men. But a ballplayer, a fantastic ballplayer. And it's a tribute to the fairmindedness of the men who play our national sport that those who cast their votes for Ty Cobb did not do so because of any love for the old terror, but simply because they knew he really was the greatest of them all.

The comments of baseball's most famous men, when speaking of Cobb, have always been overwhelming.

Connie Mack said: "He surpassed all the players I can remember." Billy Southworth: "Cobb's base-running and all-around ability more than matched Ruth's slugging." Eddie Collins: "Why was Cobb the greatest? Obvious." George Sisler, one of Ty's later-day rivals: "If you played during the years he was burning up the league, you could never forget the Georgian. I know I never will."

It could go on and on. Cliff Cravath, a former National League home-run hitter, smiled and said: "He'd chase half the present-day ballplayers out of the park with his spikes. He could dish it out and he could take it." Hughie Jennings, the Detroit manager who suffered through years of trouble with the incorrigible Cobb, once said, "Ty had his faults, but

he was the most fearless man I have ever known. When he was in his prime, he had half the American League scared stiff."

And Ty Cobb knew it. It was part of his plan of battle. A ball game wasn't an athletic contest to Cobb. It was a knock 'em down, crush 'em, relentless fight. He went into every game the way Dempsey climbed into a ring, full of fury and blood-lust, filled with a deep and burning desire to win at all costs. He had no mercy on rival players or on himself. During his flaming career, Cobb's legs were covered with scars, cuts, and bruises from his toes to his hips.

"I saw Cobb in one series where each leg was a mass of raw flesh," Grantland Rice, his long-time friend, said. "He had a temperature of 103. The doctor had ordered him to bed for a three-day rest. That afternoon he got three hits and stole three bases, sliding into second and third on sore, battered flesh."

From the time the Georgia Peach broke in as a rookie to his final day in Yankee Stadium, he played every ball game as though it were a matter of life or death. The chip on his shoulder was as large as a bat. He fought players, umpires, even fans, with his fists and with his spikes. He caused the only player strike in the history of the game. He was attacked in city streets. His life was threatened. But nothing slowed him up. If a pitcher threw a bean-ball at Cobb, as many of them did, they usually wound up in the showers, nursing their wounds. Ty would bunt down the first-base line. When the pitcher moved over to field the bunt, he collided with 180 pounds of charging, furious bone, muscle, and churning, razor-sharp spikes.

"I was their enemy," Cobb once said. "If any player learned I could be scared, I would have lasted two years in the league, not 24."

Even today, more than 20 years after his last season, Ty Cobb still defends himself against the charge that he played dirty baseball. Standing in a New York hotel room, wearing an old green bathrobe, his body crouched over in the way he used to crowd the plate, his neck thrust out like an ancient bantam rooster, Tyrus eagerly entered into a rhubarb about the way he played the game.

"Don't let anyone ever tell you I was a dirty ballplayer," he said in a high, belligerent voice. "When you're out on those paths, you got to protect yourself. The base-paths belonged to me, the runner. The rules gave me that right. I always went into a bag, full speed, feet first. I had sharp spikes on my shoes. If the baseman stood where he had no business to be and got hurt, it was his fault.

"Everyone says I deliberately spiked Frank Baker that afternoon. Why, the picture of that slide shows I couldn't have done it deliberately. Baker didn't even lose an inning," Cobb went on, "but I got 13 Black Hand letters and one of the bugs threatened to shoot me from a window outside the park."

The spiking of Frank (Home Run) Baker caused more of a furor among the fans of 1910 than Happy Chandler's more recent suspension of Leo Durocher. It was a tense, late-season game. The Athletics were battling for the pennant, and Baker was their star. Cobb, who always kept his spikes filed to a razor's edge, slid into third base with the speed of an express train. When the dust settled, Baker, who had been covering the bag, had a deep gash in his arm.

At the sight of Baker injured, the Philadelphia fans grew murderous. Only alert umpires and ushers kept Cobb from being mobbed. Never a diplomat, and angered by the furious cries of the crowd, Cobb continued to circle the bases as though bent on chewing up the entire Athletic team. The fans grew uglier and uglier . . .

In the next few days, Ty got some interesting mail. The letter that excited him most read, "Ty Cobb, Detroit Baseball Club. If you play against Philadelphia again, you will be shot from one of the buildings outside the park. We know you are yellow, because you showed it when you spiked Baker. Now let's see if you are game enough to play in the next series. If you do, you are done."

The newspapers picked up the story, and the fans were gleeful. Half the baseball citizenry, including Cobb, actually believed the writer of the note was serious. "Scared?" Cobb reflected, thinking back about it. "Sure, I was scared. How did I know that damn crank wouldn't try it?"

But when the next game with Philadelphia came due, Ty Cobb trotted out to center field and played the ball game as though he were surrounded by loving friends. Only once, in the seventh inning, did he show any sign of fright. A car backfired on the street behind the ball park. Sam Crawford, playing left field, swore Cobb jumped at least a foot.

Cobb was more than a rough-and-tumble terror, a fear-inspiring, tigerish player. He possessed a combination of unbelievable talents, an all-around efficiency that has never been equalled by any other ballplayer. He could not only out-run and out-hit all other athletes on the diamond, but he could out-think them as well. He did not rely alone on his great, natural ability, and his fine instinct, but became the most scientific player the game has ever known. He studied the game, himself, and other players. He worked tirelessly to perfect every move he made.

His teammates tell of times he would get up in the middle of the night to jot down some trick or experiment (he was always experimenting) to try in tomorrow's game. He knew the weakness of every player in the American League. His mind kept pace with the blinding speed, the beautiful coordination of his bodily movements.

It is understandable why the aging Tyrus laughs wryly at the way fielders now shift around to play hitters like Williams and DiMaggio. There was no way to play Cobb. Using a peculiar "sliding" grip on his

bat, Ty could pick off a peanut anywhere on the field. He could drive a ball to left, right or center field, bunt or drag, even put a "reverse English" spin on a bunt to make it stop dead. With Cobb at the plate and the Tigers a run behind in a late inning, any Detroit fan would bet even money Ty would tie the score.

Hurlers got rid of other renowned hitters like Ruth, Wagner, and Speaker by walking them. But Cobb was too dangerous to put on base. Speed and terror were not enough for Ty. He had also developed the hook and fall-away slide. He could, and did, score from first on a single. He would go from first to third on a sacrifice bunt. He'd score from second on infield outs and sacrifice flies. Just for the hell of it, he would get himself trapped between bases and then slide in safe.

It is hard to believe, but old time sportswriters still argue that Cobb was even better as an outfielder than he was at bat or on the bases. Most of his career he roamed the center garden. But one afternoon, when shifted to right field, he threw out three runners at first base! He would try for any ball, regardless of personal risk. He once executed a back dive into the bleachers, caught his spikes in the rope around the rail, landed on his neck, and still held the ball. The baseball writers of his time were always reporting a new Cobb feat, hailing it as the greatest stunt ever pulled by a ballplayer. But the Georgia Ghost always came up with a toppler.

On June 12, 1912, a dazed Philadelphia sportswriter announced to the world that he had just seen Cobb do something that could never be done again on a ball field. "Tyrus Cobb," he wrote, "beat out a single to first base. On the next pitch, he stole second. He then shouted that he would steal third, and he did. With two strikes on the batter, Cobb broke for the plate. The pitch was a little high, and before the catcher could pull it down, Ty slid home. The man at the plate hadn't swung at the ball, but Cobb had gone all the way around the bases."

The only thing wrong with the story was that this was not the first time Ty Cobb had pulled the stunt. Nor was it the last. Such fine catchers as Paul Krichell and Ira Thomas would actually throw a base ahead of the one Cobb was trying to steal, in order to make sure he wouldn't keep on going. Lou Criger of the Red Sox once threatened to show Ty up, telling newspapermen that every time Cobb tried to steal the next day, he would throw him out. Ty got on first base four times that next afternoon and made four thefts of second, advertising every one of them to Criger and the fans before he started his steal.

That peerless humorist, the late Ring Lardner, in one of the innumerable stories he wrote about Cobb, has a rookie pitcher asking his manager how to get Ty Cobb out. "That's easy," the manager replies caustically. "You just get a gun and shoot him."

It was part of the Cobb strategy to steal bases even when the Tigers

were winning by several runs, and the extra bases weren't needed. He did it to keep rival players jittery, frantic, on edge. It was a war of nerves, planned so that when a stolen base *was* important, Cobb had the infield so nervous they were prone to bobble the ball. One of his cutest tricks was to overtake a runner ahead of him and follow on his heels right down to home plate.

The miraculous deeds of Ty Cobb, his stunning, aggressive, electrifying play, should have put him on a pedestal and made him a hero in the eyes of fans and players. But it was just the opposite. As each year went by, as his prowess increased, the spectators' dislike grew more intense for the hot-tempered, indomitable, self-centered phantom of the bases. Each season earned him more enemies. His triumphs were greeted with the sullen hatred reserved for conquerors.

Babe Ruth would miss a third strike and turn from the plate in utter dejection, letting the fans see the disgust he felt for himself. It made him warm, lovable, human. Old Honus Wagner, who would fight through a game with almost the ferocity of Cobb, would accept defeat with a genuine smile on his round and rugged face. But Ty Cobb never learned how to lose gracefully, or even decently. Whenever a decision went against him, he retaliated with snarls and threats. He couldn't help it. He was a bad loser. He had a deeply rooted, sincere hatred for defeat.

It was not in Cobb's nature to admit he had lost, or to show he had been hurt. He never cried about the shocking punishment he took. He never allowed anyone to suspect that he felt any emotion at all other than anger and superiority. He disliked sentimentality. He hated sympathy of any kind. To him, life was a battle, winner take all. He had few, if any, intimate friends in the brotherhood of baseball. But if it bothered him, he never showed it.

In 1947, when the Dodgers went up against the Yanks in the World Series, Cobb was invited by the American League to be a guest at the games. On opening day, he stood beside Babe Ruth near home plate while the photographers took their picture. The Babe stared out at right field. "Looked like the Babe had tears in his eyes," Cobb said, describing it. "Wonderful old guy, at that," he added. "Good fellow. Liked kids." If Cobb felt anything that day, it didn't show on his face. What he was probably thinking was, "I bet I could get out there now and show these young punks a few things." And he probably could.

When talking about today's baseball, Cobb shows a hearty disdain for most of the present stars and the way the game is now played. He believes that the "live" ball has spoiled the game, eliminated the speed and skill a player needed during the era of the squashy, slow apple.

"Why, that rabbit-ball they use now has ruined the value of the one run and the double steal," he argued. "Outfielders now are no more

than caddies. They don't even attempt to cut loose with a throw to stop a run at the plate. Second base is no longer a place that puts a runner in scoring position.

"Nothing means much today," Cobb said disgustedly. "Some second-rate hinky-dink can come up and pop a ball clear to the fence, a hit that with the old ball would have barely got out of the infield."

Cobb did have respect for the great stars of his day, but he seldom mentioned it during the years he competed against them. He deliberately riled them, scoffed at them, or shunned them. Ty believed it paid off. Sometimes it did. In 1911, he was fighting it out with the sensational Shoeless Joe Jackson for the American League batting crown. With 12 games left, Jackson led by nine points. Ty stopped speaking to his rival, he cold-shouldered him in hotel lobbies and at the ball park. Jackson, an amiable, easy-going man, took Cobb's treatment to heart.

"While he was trying to figure out what it was all about," Cobb once explained, "I beat him out. If he had been relaxed and easy, I never would have overcome that nine-point lead, because he was a great hitter."

Jackson finished with a .408 season average and it is doubtful that he could have beaten out Cobb, even if Ty had not used the silent-treatment on him. Ty hit .420 that year. But Tyrus took no chances. He worked every advantage.

He whom the gods would destroy they first make mad, but the angrier Cobb became, the greater he played. It couldn't have been a secret to him that most of his teammates disliked him intensely. It has often been told, and it is undoubtedly true, that some of the Tigers would actually tip off opposing hurlers to what they believed were Cobb's weaknesses. They were so strongly against Ty that they risked losing ball games to cut down on his personal glory.

The crusade against Cobb got so out of hand in 1910, only five years after he had started playing, that American League president Ban Johnson had to investigate the situation. The trouble reached its height at the end of the season when Larry Lajoie of Cleveland and Cobb were battling it out for the league batting championship. The Chalmers automobile company had offered to give the batting champion a new car, and the entire league was rooting for the Cleveland second-baseman to beat out Cobb.

Lajoie was the idol of the day. Kids followed him in the streets the way they later followed Ruth. He was a large, barrel-chested, friendly man, adored by fans and players alike. Cobb had distinguished himself that year by knocking down a colored waiter in a Cleveland restaurant, fist-fighting with umpires, and charging into players like a fullback. As the season drew toward a close, Ty was several points ahead of the aging monarch of swat, Lajoie. Then, in one of the final games, Cleveland

against the St. Louis Browns, all Lajoie did was to collect eight hits in eight times at bat.

The way that game was played was what caused Ban Johnson's investigation. The St. Louis players were accused of merely waving their gloves at the ball every time Lajoie hit. The infield played deep, allowing Lajoie to reach first on bunts that could have been easily fielded. One of the umpires, it was revealed, had been offered a new suit of clothes to give big Larry the benefit of the doubt on all plays. The ump made several trips to the press box to make sure that Lajoie's bunts were being scored as hits! The deal was so raw that league boss Johnson later booted both the manager of the St. Louis team and the umpire out of the major leagues. In spite of the "rigging," Cobb won the batting championship, .385 to Lajoie's .384.

The only man Ty Cobb openly admired during his stormy career was pitcher Walter Johnson. The big Washington hurler was the complete opposite of Tyrus in temperament. He was a kindly, thoughtful, sweet-tempered man who loved his fellow ballplayers and never raised his voice. Cobb likes to talk about Johnson and how he discovered the great right-hander's only weakness.

"Johnson was the greatest pitcher that ever lived," Ty says. "Why, there's no telling what his record would have been if he had pitched for a ball club that could hit. Walter was the best hitter on the team. And how he could buzz them in there! He would get faster every inning, his curve got better, and his speed ball would look like a pea coming at you.

"He sure gave me a lot of trouble," Ty said. "And then I discovered a way to beat him. Walter had only one weakness. He was such a good-hearted guy, he was always afraid that one of those fast balls of his would bean a batter. When I heard about that, I began to crowd the plate. I'd put my toes right against the plate, so that Johnson had to shoot for the corners to keep from hitting me. My head sticking out over the plate made him worry so much I'd work him for three balls. Knowing he'd have to get the next one in there, I'd step back and paste it." Cobb laughed. "Any other pitcher would have beamed me."

If Johnson showed mercy toward Cobb, it was never returned in kind by Ty toward any pitcher. The Fenway Park fans who gathered one day in 1916 to watch the Red Sox and the Tigers in a crucial game during the pennant race were treated to the sight of Cobb's Olympian anger as he charged from the plate and threw his bat at the head of moundsman Carl Mays. A squad of policemen escorted the fuming Ty from the field to save him from the bitterly angry, lynch-minded spectators.

Even in Spring training, Cobb played with no holds barred. In a pre-season game against the Giants, Ty slammed into second base one

day and spiked Charley Herzog. The players staged a hot verbal tiff on the field, but that wasn't enough for the terrible Tyrus. He accosted Herzog in the lobby of the Oriental Hotel that night and snarled, "If you didn't get enough this afternoon, see me any time in my room. I'll be there all evening."

That was too much for Herzog. With two companions, he went up to visit Cobb. Herzog charged into the room and began swinging. It was a historic battle, ending with Herzog bent over the back of a bed, out on his feet. As he limped dazedly from the room, Cobb shouted after him, "If anyone else wants anything, tell 'em to come right up!"

The only players Cobb respected were those who were not afraid of him. One of these was the squat, chunky dynamo of the National League, Honus Wagner. Hans was a silent man on the field, and absolutely fearless. The great Pirate shortstop was considered as fast as Cobb on the bases, if not quite as reckless and daring. Cobb enjoys telling how he and Wagner met for the first time.

"I was standing on first base in the 1909 World Series against Pittsburgh," he said. "Honus was at short and I cupped my hands and yelled, 'Hey, Kraut-head, I'm comin' down on the next pitch!' Wagner didn't say anything, but when I got there he had the ball and he slapped it into my mouth for three stitches."

Cobb could take punishment, but he tolerated taking it only from men he thought had superhuman baseball ability, men like Honus Wagner. In picking an all-time, All-Star team, Wagner was the first player Cobb mentioned. "He was the best," Cobb said emphatically. "There was never anyone like him."

Others on Ty Cobb's star team were catchers Mickey Cochrane, Bill Dickey, and Ray Schalk; pitchers Walter Johnson, Christy Mathewson, and Eddie Plank. At first base, Ty chose George Sisler; at second, Eddie Collins; at shortstop, Wagner; on third, Buck Weaver. Then he stopped and puzzled for a moment. "In the outfield?" he grinned. "I guess I'd say old Joe Jackson in left, Tris Speaker in center, and Babe Ruth in right field."

Ty did his best to make Ruth's life miserable during the years the Bambino was rising to fame. In later years, Ruth became quite adept at heckling, but old ballplayers say, grinning, "Babe learned most of that name-calling stuff from Cobb." Ty did not enjoy the hero-worship the fans bestowed on the Babe, and the fact that Ruth's name could outdraw his at the gate. Whenever Detroit played the Yanks, Cobb would razz the big fellow unmercifully, hurling every name in the book at him. As the teams would change sides between innings, Cobb would trot by Ruth, with such taunts as, "Somebody stinks like a polecat! G'wan in and strike out, ya worthless bum!"

Even as a player-manager, as late as 1924, Ty was still riding the

Sultan of Swat. In one game, Meusel of the Yanks and Cole of the Tigers got into a fight. Ruth was standing at the plate watching it when Cobb came charging in from center field and banged into him like a 10-ton truck. The Babe began to swing and a thousand fans poured out of the stands. It was quite a melee, with the players, cops, and fans swinging fists. To Cobb's delight, Ruth drew a \$50 fine while Ty got off scot-free.

The one player Cobb has never forgiven is Leo Durocher. It was a case of hate at first sight when rookie Durocher broke into the big leagues and began to play against Ty. The Lip was probably the only player who could dish it out, with his mouth, on a par with the jaw-wagging Cobb. Ty was getting on in years, while Leo was full of spunk and fight, bouncing players off the base-paths with a hip that swung like a barn door.

Ty would get to first base and Leo would begin to yell.

"Come on down, you old has-been! I'm waitin' for you. Come on, you're yellow!"

Cobb would go crazy with anger, spluttering oaths at the rookie which could be heard by the people in the farthest bleacher seats. He threatened to murder him.

"Aw, shut up!" Leo would scream back. "You been terrorizing this league for years and now you're gonna get it back! You'd better stay there, you old goat!"

On the next pitch, Cobb would take off like a comet for second base. What infuriated him more than anything else was that he could seldom hurt or annoy the Durocher kid. Leo was very cute around second base, almost as tricky and nasty as the old master himself. Even today, Cobb bristles whenever Durocher's name is mentioned. But there is little doubt that if Leo had tangled with Ty during the height of the Tiger's career, the Lip would have been chewed to pieces. When Cobb was mixing it up with Leo, he was crowding 40.

Cobb was a perfectionist. He often complained bitterly that a lifetime was too short to solve every detail of hitting. "The longer I live, the more I realize that batting is a mental problem rather than a physical stunt," he once told a writer. "The ability to grasp the bat, swing at the proper time, take a proper stance, all these things are elemental. Batting rather is a study in psychology, a sizing up of pitcher and catcher, and observing little details that are of immense importance. It's like the study of crime, the work of a detective as he picks up clues."

The worst epithet you could hurl at Cobb was to call him "lucky." It would send him into a towering rage. "I make my own luck!" he would shout back at rival players.

The Detroit phantom has never denied that he played rough-and-ready baseball. But he likes to remind you that his wild, slashing, fierce

type of play was a credit to "the red-blooded game of baseball," and that only a mollicoddle would not learn how to protect himself. In "protecting himself," Ty had most of the players in the American League running for cover or hobbling around nursing their wounds.

To those casually acquainted with the facts of Ty Cobb's early life, it is not easy to recognize what made him such a furious, antagonistic, bitterly competitive athlete and man. If you knew nothing about Cobb's boyhood, you might risk a guess that he came from the hungry slums, from some poverty-ridden, jungle-like street where the fight for life is raw, fierce, and unceasing, where fists and sticks rule and only the strong survive.

The guess couldn't be more wrong.

Tyrus Raymond Cobb was the eldest son in a distinguished, cultured Southern family of considerable means. His father, W. H. Cobb, was a State Senator and later a superintendent of country schools. Ty was born on December 18, 1886, on a country estate in Narrows, Banks County, Georgia. The family also had a home in the nearby town of Royston, where Ty spent most of his childhood.

The fiery genius of the diamond was started on his baseball career by a Methodist minister. The Reverend's name was John Yarborough, a large, red-haired man who had attended Richmond Academy, where he had been a hard-hitting catcher. When he was assigned to the church in Royston, brother Yarborough had a great deal of difficulty trying to coax the boys of the town to attend Sunday School more regularly. He finally won them over by agreeing to act as manager of their ball club.

"We called the team the Royston Rompers," Yarborough later reminisced, "and on it was a little, skinny, spare-built fellow named Tyrus Cobb. I thought at the time that he was about the best natural ballplayer I had ever seen."

It was during the time Cobb played on Yarborough's team that the big minister learned about the boy's conflict with his father. Senator Cobb wanted his son to become a lawyer. Ty had set his heart on being a surgeon. It wasn't a childish wish on young Cobb's part, but one that has existed all during his life. His best friends during his baseball days were medical men, and he spent many hours in hospitals watching operations.

It is ironic that Senator Cobb, who objected so strenuously to his son's desire to be a doctor, will be honored in the form of the Cobb Memorial Hospital, which Ty is building in Royston in memory of the distinguished service his parents gave to the community. And it is both ironic and bitter that one of Ty's own sons, who did become a physician, will not be in any way associated with the hospital, because father and son do not get along.

"I think it is wrong for a father to tell a son what to do," the old ballplayer said. And then, in almost the next breath, he said, "If that son

of mine would see things the way he ought to, we would be in this hospital thing together."

The memories most clear in Cobb's mind today, closer and more poignant than anything in his baseball career, are those early scenes he had with his father. Their arguments were frequent and stormy. "I can still see him," Cobb said, "standing tall and stern, his hands behind his back, telling me I didn't know what I wanted to be. It made me feel that something was wrong with me.

"He used to send me down to see a friend of his, a judge," Ty went on. "I always knew what was coming. The judge would get me into the office, down from the shelves would come Blackstone, and he would talk to me about the law and how great a future it held for any young man. I used to resent it. I guess I was pretty mean and stubborn about it."

Playing baseball was an outlet for Ty's emotions. He did not begin to play with any desire of becoming a professional. His emotions were very close to the surface then, and Yarborough recalled his hot temper, the tears that would come to his eyes, the fury with which he played the game. Ty began to read all he could about baseball. He bought the old *Police Gazette*, which carried baseball news. He questioned Yarborough for hours about players and rules, and began practicing with a vengeance.

"I was about 17 then," Cobb said. "I remember I had trouble sleeping at night. I used to get up and walk through that little town—had about 24,000 people in it—walk all night, look up at the stars, and burn with a desire to get away. I felt I was being held in some sort of bondage. I just had to get out of that town. It was about that time I decided I would become a ballplayer."

Secretly, Cobb began to write letters to the manager of the Augusta team and other clubs in the South Atlantic League, asking for a trial. Nothing happened. Ty then went to the Reverend Yarborough for help, knowing that the minister had considerable influence with members of the Augusta ball team. Cobb's father heard about it. To put it mildly, he was both shocked and angry. In those days, in cultured circles, a pro ballplayer was looked upon as little better than a hoodlum.

It was the good Reverend John Yarborough who interceded for Cobb with both parties, the Augusta baseball team and Ty's father. The Senator was much the tougher obstacle, but the minister was persuasive. He convinced the senior Cobb that it was useless to attempt to hold down his strong-willed son. "It is better to have him go away with your approval," Yarborough reasoned, "than to have him go without it. And he will surely go."

He was right. Nothing could have stopped Ty, once he decided to make the move. The Senator finally yielded, but he never did approve of his son's profession. Ty left home under a cloud of silent protest from

all his family, determined to "show them," and knowing he would never return unless he made good.

Yarborough knew that young Tyrus would not have an easy time of it, no matter what profession he chose. He was almost certain that Cobb, in spite of his natural talent, would not stay in baseball. As they walked to the station, he said, "Tyrus, you will get a berth on that Augusta team, but you will not stay there."

"Why not?" Cobb flared. "I intend to stay there."

"Then be careful," Yarborough warned. "Stop being so bull-headed. Learn to take orders. If you don't, you'll be fired before the season is out."

Ty Cobb arrived in Augusta in 1904. He paid his own training expenses, and made the ball team. He lasted exactly two games. In the first one, he hit a home run and a double. He whacked the four-bagger after the manager, Con Strouthers, had ordered him to bunt. Strouthers was a hard-boiled gent, and he tied the can to Ty after the second game, telling Cobb he wanted only ballplayers who would do what they were told.

Just three years later, the hard-headed Georgia kid hit .350 for the Detroit Tigers, sparked them to a pennant, and finished first in the American League batting race. Yarborough, who encouraged him, and Strouthers, who fired him, lived to see Ty Cobb become the most sensational player of the century. Senator Cobb died a few months before his son began his career in the major leagues.

When the Augusta manager sacked Cobb, Ty wangled an outfield berth on the Anniston, Alabama, team in the Southeastern League. In 22 games, he hit .370. Later in the season, when Strouthers left the Augusta club, Cobb, through the help of Grantland Rice, was brought back to that team. In 1905, when the Tigers began Spring training in Augusta, the major-leaguers got their first look at the then 18-year-old outfielder. Most of them thought he was not only brash, but crazy.

Augusta played practice games against the Tigers, and Cobb put on a one-man show that delighted the big-leaguers. He ran his legs off, shouted and ranted, razed the great names on the Detroit team, brawled with the umpires, and acted as though he owned the baseball world. The Detroit players egged him on. They teased and taunted him. Few of them paid much attention to him as a ballplayer. They looked on him as an oddity, a clown, a fool kid. That Spring, Bill Armour, the walrus-mustached manager of the Detroit team, could have had his pick of any player on the Augusta club for \$500. Ty Cobb wasn't even considered.

Ty stayed in Augusta and began burning up the Sally League. Grantland Rice, then an official in the league, kept bombarding the majors with reports of Cobb's batting averages. Late in 1905, the Detroit team was hard hit by injuries to its outfielders. A desperate Armour sent scout

Heinie Youngman down to have a look at "that wild, crazy kid we saw last Spring."

When Youngman got to Augusta, Ty was out of the game with a spiked thumb. Heinie listened to the reports on Cobb's playing, took what he considered a great chance, and signed the young player. Some of the newspapers of the time mentioned the deal, not even bothering to check the correct spelling of his first name. "Cyrus Cobb, outfielder, was signed today for \$750 to play for the Detroit Tigers," a one-line report read.

"My name is Tyrus Raymond Cobb," the young Southerner told a mildly interested Detroit reporter who approached him during a morning practice late in August, 1905. As the reporter smiled and turned away, it would have surprised him to know that this was a name he was to write thousands of times.

The explosive young ballplayer was not welcomed by the Detroit players with open arms. Apologists for Cobb's belligerent baseball behavior often blame it on the rough, devilish reception the young rookie received at the hands of his Tiger teammates. In those days most bushers took a much heavier hazing than they do now. The wise ones accepted their fate with good-natured meekness. Young Tyrus couldn't and wouldn't take it. The more he was goaded, the more cocky and aggressive he became, returning threat for threat.

Veteran players would shove him aside when he tried to take his turn at batting practice.

"Get out of my way, you old goats!" Ty would storm at them. "I'm a better ballplayer now than you'll ever be!"

Most of the players were from North of the Mason-Dixon line and they rode the "Cracker" unmercifully. They sawed his bats in half, tied his clothes in knots, cursed him, tried to bully him, heaped on his raging head every indignity their active brains could devise. The more it infuriated Cobb, the more they razed and hazed him. Within two weeks' time, Ty didn't have a friend on the entire ball club. Off the field, he took to living alone. What began as playful taunting became serious and resulted in enmities that held on year after year.

If Cobb felt hurt, or minded the way he was badgered and ostracized, he never showed it. Even now, he won't admit that it had any other effect beyond infuriating him. His tone of voice, when talking about his relationship with other Detroit players, is no longer bitter, but it is still guarded.

"The hazing I got from those men," he said, "made me mad. I was just a kid and I vowed I'd show 'em. I resented the rough, tough way they acted. I soon found out the manners my family had taught me had no place in baseball. I decided I'd forget being a gentleman and be tougher and meaner than any of them."

No man ever succeeded at anything so fully.

Cobb's answer to the treatment he received was to find someone on whom he could release his pent-up wrath. He chose another rookie, a huge, burly catcher named Charlie (Dutch) Schmidt. It was obvious why Ty picked on Charlie. Schmidt was the strongest man in baseball, a powerful giant who had once fought the heavyweight champion, Jack Johnson. Dutch often drove spikes into the clubhouse floor with his bare fists, just for amusement. A genial, likeable fellow, he would throw himself on the ground and defy the entire team to hoist him to his feet.

The way Ty tormented and bedeviled the easygoing Schmidt gained him more newspaper space during his first season in the major leagues than anything he did on the playing field. Ty would douse Dutch with water, throw things into his food, humiliate and berate him. Schmidt took it with the patience of a saint, bewildered by Cobb's relentless and cruel attacks, doing all he could to avoid a conflict. Finally, unable to get Dutch to strike the first blow, Cobb jumped him one day after a ball game.

It wasn't a fight, it was a massacre. Schmidt, who out-weighed Cobb by 50 pounds, gave him a fierce beating. Ty would not quit, even when Schmidt begged him to cry "uncle." It finally ended when the Detroit players, unable to stand the slaughter any longer, pulled Dutch off the battered young Georgian.

A few weeks later, Cobb tried it again, and took another thrashing. For some reason, instead of drawing the Detroit players' admiration for his sheer guts and ability to take punishment, Cobb's actions made him more despised. All their sympathy was with the victor, the amiable strongman, Dutch Schmidt.

"I had no heart for those fights," the catcher once said. "I was always glad when they pulled that kid off me."

Years later, Schmidt sided with Cobb in a fight and they became friends. But Dutch was always nervous whenever Ty was near him.

During all the years Ty Cobb played for Detroit, until he became the boss himself, his manager was Hughie (Ee-Yah) Jennings. The "Ee-Yah" man was a warm-hearted, wise character whose sideshows in the coaching box delighted the fans. He would suddenly leap into the air, screech "Ee-Yah! Ee-Yah," pull handfuls of grass from the ground, and carry on like a madman. Any other manager, lacking Hughie's sense of humor and tolerance, would have undoubtedly rid himself of the troublesome, turbulent Cobb in a hurry.

It was not possible for Jennings to like Cobb, but he managed to get along with him without using his fists. Ty, in turn, was never particularly friendly with Jennings. It was impossible for him to like anyone in those days, particularly anyone from whom he was obliged to take orders. Hughie deserved some sort of medal for the diplomacy he em-

ployed during the 14 years the Peach played under him. It must have been a bitter blow to Jennings when Frank J. Navin, the Tiger owner, fired him in 1920 and put Ty in the saddle as player-manager.

Cobb's first full season with the Tigers, 1906, and his last one, 1926, were the only years during which he was not the most dangerous man in the league, and the star of the Tigers. Although he hit over .300 in '06, he was just another promising, though very terrifying young player. By 1907, freed from the stigma of being a rookie, with a hard shell beginning to form over his emotions, Ty cut loose at the plate and on the base-paths. Led by Cobb's powerful slugging and speed, the Detroit team overtook the mighty Athletics and, with a week of play remaining, stormed into Philadelphia trailing the Mackmen by only three points.

Ty's feats in Philly made him a hero. As much of a hero as he could ever be. The Tigers won the first game, 5-4. The second clash between the two clubs was to be a double-header. It turned out to be one of the most memorable games in baseball. Until the fifth inning of the first game, the Athletics led 7-1. Then the furious Detroit team began to close the gap, coming into the ninth inning only two runs behind the Philadelphia team, 9-7.

Cobb strode to the plate with a man on first base. The immortal Rube Waddell was pitching for the A's. Ty, as usual, was spluttering insults in the direction of the pitcher's box. Hughie Jennings was war-dancing up and down the third-base coaching line. The fans began to ride Cobb, their voices rising to a mighty crescendo of hate. Unknowingly, they were providing Tyrus with just the sort of background he needed to help him rise to the occasion.

Ty cracked Waddell's first pitch, driving it high and handsome over the right-field fence and tying up the ball game. The contest continued for 17 innings, and ended in a 9-9 tie score. Cobb's homer, which caused the game to end in a tie, put the Tigers a half-game ahead, broke the Athletics' spirit, and helped Detroit go on to win the pennant.

Nothing Ty Cobb did on the ball field had any sort of soothing effect on his own truculent disposition, or softened the feelings the Detroit players had for him. He continued to live alone. The place he chose, a third-rate hotel several streets away from the hostelry where the Tigers lived, earned him a reputation as being not only anti-social, but tight as a tick.

Where money matters were concerned, Cobb was as obdurate and demanding as Babe Ruth later became. As early as 1908, Ty began his holdouts for more money. The 21-year-old batting champ demanded \$5,000 a year, then considered an unreasonable amount. The newspapers took sides, Cobb grew more stubborn, and the Tigers began Spring practice without him. Tyrus now says he might have quit baseball if his salary demand had not been settled.

"I wanted security," he said. "I didn't know when I was going to get hurt and be forced out of the game. I wanted to give my best to the game, but I wanted all the money I could get in return. I didn't want to be considered just another muscle-worker. Yes, I was ambitious. Call it that. If they hadn't paid me what I felt I deserved, I would have quit and gone to college. At the time, nobody believed me when I said it, but I really meant it."

Navin did finally come through, boosting Cobb's salary to \$4,500. Ty decided it was a fair compromise, picked up his bat, and reported for work. But, almost every year after that, he would raise the same commotion about salary, forcing the Detroit boss to up the ante to \$9,000 in 1909, and eventually drawing as much as \$40,000 a year for his services. Until Ruth, he was the highest-paid athlete in the major leagues. Many ballplayers give Cobb as much credit as the Bambino for the high salaries now enjoyed by star performers.

It has often been said that Cobb was a shrewd businessman, a man completely at home in the world of high finance. Tyrus always denies it, along with the other accusations that he owes his wealth to a combination of tight-fistedness and downright luck. Actually, neither interpretation is entirely accurate.

The richest retired athlete in the world acquired his extensive collection of dollars through years of cautious, conservative investment. He played the cotton market with some astuteness, but was always carefully advised. The automobile industry was coming into its own during Ty's early days in Detroit, and he got into several good deals then. His biggest sweep was made in 1921, when he bought a large block of stock in the Coca Cola Company. It was then selling at \$1.18 a share, and he was to see it rise to \$181 a share. He now owns stock in dozens of companies, has one home in California and another in Georgia, but lives most of the time in a beautiful house on Lake Tahoe, in Nevada.

Cobb values money. He often seems strange and overly cautious when it comes to parting with a dollar. For example, when he came to New York as a guest of the American League to see the World Series, he lived in a small room in a downtown hotel that could hardly be described as first-class.

"I usually stay at a better place," he explained self-consciously, "but, what the hell, the American League is paying for this one, so I may as well use it."

During Cobb's ballplaying days, he was forever giving his teammates tips, urging them to invest their money and plan for the future. Even the baseball writers who panned him came in for financial advice when Cobb felt in the mood to give it. In Fort Worth, Texas, after he had bought the Coca Cola stock, he urged three prominent sportswriters to follow his example.

"He gave us this tip one night in his room," Henry Edwards, then with the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, said. "If we had followed his advice, each of us would have made a quarter of a million dollars."

For a man who was such a shrewd realist, Cobb was unusually superstitious. During days when he was having a good run of hits, he always walked to the ball park over the same route, wore the same clothes, ate the same food. For most of his playing career, he ate only two meals a day, skipping lunch. He always hung his towel on the same peg in the dressing room, believing it brought him luck. When a trainer absent-mindedly moved it one day, Ty flew into a rage and threatened to annihilate him. He never allowed a hat to be placed on a bed, and he still doesn't. The man who hated to be called "lucky" truly believed in luck.

Checking Cobb's feats, listening to other players talk about him, listening to Cobb, himself, you think, *what an inspiring, wonderful creature this man would have been without that terrible nature*. And then you realize that it was just that "terrible nature," that furious, sadistic, driving compulsion, that made Cobb one of sports' immortals.

All his life, Ty went on working out new methods to improve his speed and skill. One day, during Spring training, when Ty was well into his thirties, a newspaperman watched a rookie win a foot race against Cobb, circling the bases a foot ahead of him. This was news. Nobody had ever been faster on the base-paths than Ty. The reporter wired the story back to Detroit.

When Cobb read the story, an angry gleam came into his eyes. He called the newspaperman and told him to be sure to get out for the practice game the next day. Cobb stole four bases that afternoon, traveling the paths with the blinding speed of old. After the game, he approached the suddenly nervous reporter, carrying a pair of baseball spikes.

"Lift these," Cobb said, scowling at the newspaperman.

The reporter took them. They seemed to be three times as heavy as the ordinary baseball shoe.

"Yeah," Cobb growled, "weighted shoes. That's what I was wearing the day you wrote that story. If you hadn't been so all-fired dumb, you would have realized that something was wrong when that kid beat me."

When Ty cooled off, he went on to explain that he had thought up the idea of wearing weighted shoes in training because it would make him work harder, make him even speedier when he switched to light shoes. He used somewhat the same technique in batting. He was the first hitter to swing three bats when warming up before approaching the plate. Fans thought it was a show-off stunt. Cobb's crashing hits proved they were wrong.

It always seemed to spectators as though Cobb's daring, slam-bang slides gave him deep, physical pleasure. They didn't. They could not

have, particularly early in the season, when his hips were covered with raw sliding sores. "But I learned to hit that dirt as though I loved it," he explained. "By mid-season, when my hide had toughened up, I was thankful that I had forced myself to take it earlier in the year."

Looking back, the winged Georgian considers 1911, '12, and '13 his best years. It is not startling that these were also the seasons when manager Hughie Jennings found him the hardest to handle, and the ire of the fans toward Tyrus reached an all-time high. In Chicago, objecting to his hotel room, Ty got into a row with the desk clerk. The room was over a railroad track. Ty called Jennings and yelled, "The engines are driving me crazy. How do you expect me to hit if I don't get any sleep?"

Hughie tried to calm Ty down, but neglected to have his room changed. That night, Cobb packed up and took off for Detroit. The Tigers had to play two games against the White Sox without their star. That was mild Cobb behavior compared to what happened a month later in New York.

The stands were packed at Highlander Park that day, filled with loud-lunged, anti-Cobb characters. There was one entire section of fans behind the wooden rail in the left-field bleachers, who devoted all of their attention to riding Cobb. They were led by a fan named Lueker, a man with a fog-horn voice, who was none too delicate about the insults he hurled at Ty. As the game progressed, the fan began to get rougher in his abuse and Cobb began to fume.

Ty did his best to hold his temper. One inning, knowing his turn to bat would not come up, Cobb even stayed out in the field, not trusting himself to pass the rail along the left-field bleachers. The next inning, on his way into the dugout, Lueker cut loose with some more abusive language.

When the Detroit side was retired and Cobb started back out toward his position, manager Jennings, glancing at him, could tell what was going to happen. "I knew he was going to do it," Hughie said later. "Once I saw the look in his eyes, I was sure of it. But there was no way of stopping him."

Ty trotted down the left-field line. As he turned to go out into center, the fan cut loose with his taunts again. Cobb suddenly swung around and charged. He advanced on the bleachers in the direction of the voice, vaulted over the rail, and shoved his way through the mass of spectators until he reached Lueker. Then he began to punch the daylights out of him.

The fans were so amazed and startled that nobody moved until Cobb had finished with Lueker. Nobody could believe what they had seen. No ballplayer had ever dared hop into the stands that way. As Cobb finished, they began to rise in rage. He had to fight his way back down to the playing field. All the Detroit players, led by Wahoo Sam Craw-

ford, stood along the field brandishing bats. They were certain the fans would storm on the field and mob Cobb. They almost did.

Cobb was, of course, tossed out of the game. When Ban Johnson received the umpires' report of the incident, he suspended Tyros indefinitely. The action caused the most amazing series of events in baseball. The entire Detroit team met a few days later and decided to go on strike until Ty was reinstated! They didn't do it out of love for Cobb, but because they knew how much he meant to the team. He was then hitting over .400. Some of them also felt that Lueker had been overly abusive, even for a fan.

There was a game coming up with the Athletics on May 18 and manager Jennings, unable to reason with the players, wired owner Frank Navin in Detroit. Jennings said, in effect, "These guys are not kidding. They won't play without Cobb. It will cost us \$5,000 for every game in which we can't put a team in the field."

Navin called Jennings and told him to get some sort of team together to go against the Athletics. It was "some sort of team," all right. Hughie hired some Philadelphia semi-pros, a few sandlot players, and some schoolboys from nearby St. Joseph's College—one of whom, Al Travers, pitched the ball game. He is now Reverend Albert Joseph Travers, a priest and teacher at St. Joseph's.

The "new" Tigers were paid \$10 apiece for the game and hurler Travers got \$25, with a bonus for going the entire nine innings. A curious, fun-loving crowd of 20,000 Philadelphia spectators watched the Athletics swamp the pick-up team by a score of 24-2. The A's nicked Travers for 25 hits.

The league president, Ban Johnson, literally blew his top when he heard about the farce. He cancelled the Monday Philly-Detroit game and called in all the Detroit players. He read them the riot act.

"Unless this team reports for its scheduled game in Washington on May 21," Ban stormed, "I will drive every single one of you out of baseball!"

Ban undoubtedly meant it. Amazingly enough, it was Ty Cobb who suddenly sided with Ban Johnson and urged the players to halt the strike. They finally did. They played the game in Washington, winning 2-0. Johnson fined practically every player on the team \$100. Cobb got off with a \$50 clip and a 10-day suspension.

Later in the season, Ty and his wife were driving toward the railroad station in Detroit. Three men jumped on the running board of the car and one of them slashed at Ty with a knife. Cobb was badly cut, but he stopped the car and fought off his attackers. The incident was reported to the police, but the thugs were never caught. Newspaper accounts seem to agree that the attack was arranged to avenge the beating Cobb had given the fan in Highlander Park.

Cobb went right on fighting. He suffered broken ribs, fingers, and thumbs. He fought in and out of the ball parks. One day it would be a husky Detroit butcher-boy whom Ty would take on in a street brawl. The next it would be a player or an umpire. The fight between Cobb and umpire Billy Evans is still rated by the ballplayers and fans who saw it on a par with the Dempsey-Firpo tiff. It took place under the Detroit stands after a ball game, and it went on for fully an hour. Evans, who knew how to handle his fists, gave Ty a terrific pasting until Cobb got the upper hand by using rough-and-tumble, Indian-fighter tactics.

The years rolled ahead and the Detroit Tigers slumped as a ball club, but Ty Cobb went on burning up the league. At the age of 32, in 1918, when the Germans were advancing on Chateau-Thierry, Ty Cobb was leading the league with an average of .382. He laid aside his well-worn cudgel and joined the Army, working up to the rank of captain in the Chemical Warfare Division. The war was over before he could get into action, and, in 1919, he was back in a Tiger uniform again, ready to take over. He took over. Ty Cobb won his 12th batting championship, in 1919, clouting a brisk .384.

By 1921, he was considered, at 35, a really old ballplayer. He was suffering from a fractured rib, torn ligaments, all the battle scars and aches and pains collected in 17 years of ferocious competition. Everyone said he was surely through by now. Why didn't he retire?

Ty Cobb had proven all there was to prove by now.

He held almost all the records. He had a bankful of money. He was seemingly a happily married man. It was high time for the obstreperous old warhorse to quit. Even the fans who hated him the most didn't want to see him go on playing, weakening his record, ruining his reputation as the greatest player of his time.

They had Ruth to love. They didn't need Cobb to hate.

Why didn't he quit?

Cobb couldn't quit. He couldn't quit as long as he could still run and hit and pick a rhubarb with an umpire or a player.

Ty took over as the player-manager of the Tigers. He took over with fight and enthusiasm, digging in like a rookie working to make the team. The Tigers were given a new life. Sportswriters covering Spring training wrote that they got baseball morning, noon, and night, that it was an education to "watch the old boy put zip into the club."

Under Ty's magic hand, the batting average of the team began to skyrocket. He could certainly teach 'em to hit. From seventh in club batting average, the Tigers climbed into first place in the American League, chalking up a team average of .316. Ty pitted player against player on his own team. He infused them with the rivalry and anger that he always felt on the playing field. He egged the genial Harry Heilmann into riding Bobby Veach into becoming a great slugger.

"I don't care what you say to him," Cobb ordered Harry. "Call him yellow, call him anything. But make him mad and keep him that way. That'll make him hit!"

Heilmann, who followed Veach to the plate, rode him into the ground. But Bobby hit a brisk .338. When Harry tried to explain, at the end of the season, that it was all a gag, a plot, Veach wouldn't listen to him. Ty was supposed to patch it up, but he never did.

Moving into his 40th birthday, still scampering around bases for the Tigers as a player-manager, Ty mowed through still another season, thumping out a staggering .378 average, being crowded out of the batting championship by Harry Heilmann, the youngster he had helped fashion into a great hitter. By this time, scribes and fans alike had thrown up their hands, believing Tyrus Raymond Cobb would play baseball forever.

Poor old Ty Cobb, still stealing bases like a kid. At 40, still dashing for home to win a ball game, crossing up infielders, scaring the living hell out of ancients and rookies alike. A worn, tired, battle-happy wreck, who, by some magic, was still able to send a screaming double to any field, lay down a perfect bunt, dive into the stands and snare a ball with the same daring he did back when Teddy Roosevelt was president and life was "bully."

How he was able to do it, nobody has ever been able to figure. When he left the Tigers in 1926, he still wouldn't rack up his bat. He went on to play two more years for Connie Mack, for the Athletics, the team that had the distinction of hating him more than any other. By that time, it was an honor to have fought against Cobb, to have been singled out for a hunk of the Cobb wrath, to have been battered and spiked by him.

On May 10, 1927, some 23 years after his first game in a major-league uniform, the 41-year-old Ty Cobb was again under suspension by the aging Ban Johnson. All he had done was hit a home run for the Athletics in a game against the Red Sox. It was a ninth-inning homer that would have tied the score. The ball was fair when it sailed out of the park, but a young plate ump named Ormsby had the temerity to say it curved foul just as it disappeared. Ty pushed him around somewhat. Cobb was still Cobb.

He started his career in 1905, against the New York ball club, as a pinch hitter. He ended it the same way on September 11, 1928, against a New York team in Yankee Stadium. There was a difference. Nobody knew who the kid at the plate was on that August day in '05. But nobody had to be told who it was stepping up there to pinch hit for Jimmy Dykes of the Athletics on that day in 1928. For a quarter of a century they had watched, in anger and fascination, the man with the peculiar grip on the bat, left hand high, right hand low. They had

watched him stand with neck thrust out, body crouched over the plate, showing them an angry, determined, scornful, and fighting face.

Yes, there was a difference. This time he grounded out.

The world didn't seem to change so rapidly for Ty Cobb while he was still playing baseball. Everything seemed dreadfully changed and different after it was over. He had money and fame. There was still hunting and golf in Georgia, the big home in California, but nothing seemed to work out right.

The war was over, but the warrior couldn't seem to adjust. He quarreled with his wife, the tiny Charlie Lombard Cobb who had been with him since 1908, through almost all his playing years. She wanted to divorce him. He didn't want that. He fought against it, but he also fought against himself. He couldn't seem to fit in anywhere. He grew mean and cantankerous. And there wasn't any ball field, with the rough bodily contact that could work away the angry moods.

The quarrels went on. His five children moved away from home and Ty closed up the family house in Atherton, California. He rigged up booby-trap contraptions, water buckets and the like, to keep strangers away. He traveled around the country, talked to old ballplayers, got mellow and then sad over the drinks and the talk.

Now and then there would be a quote in the newspapers. Ty Cobb criticizing the way a star of today plays. Ty Cobb telling about how it used to be. But nothing seemed to go right for him.

What do you do when you can't hit and run any more?

He was arrested for reckless driving in Placerville, California, entering into a rhubarb with the judge, who slapped him into jail for two hours. It was not quite like being sent to the showers. You can't get back at a judge the way you could at a rival player or an umpire. There was no fun in it, no angry, yelling fans in the stands. Nothing. His Reno divorce became final. Some of the papers mentioned, along with personal, humiliating details, what a great ballplayer he had been.

He remembers the far-away words of his father that day he left home to play ball. The stern, disapproving man he loved, who said, "Align yourself on the side of right and fear no man."

He feared nothing. But there is nothing and nobody to swing at any more.

Many of the old ballplayers he crashed into, bullied, and fought against have forgiven him. Standing in the tiny New York hotel room, scarred legs showing beneath the old green bathrobe, he mashes a piece of sugar into a glass with a fountain pen, pours a little bourbon on it, and tells you how it was in 1910, in '17 and '23. It is hard for him to sit still. The nervous energy is still there, the longing for action, for something to happen.

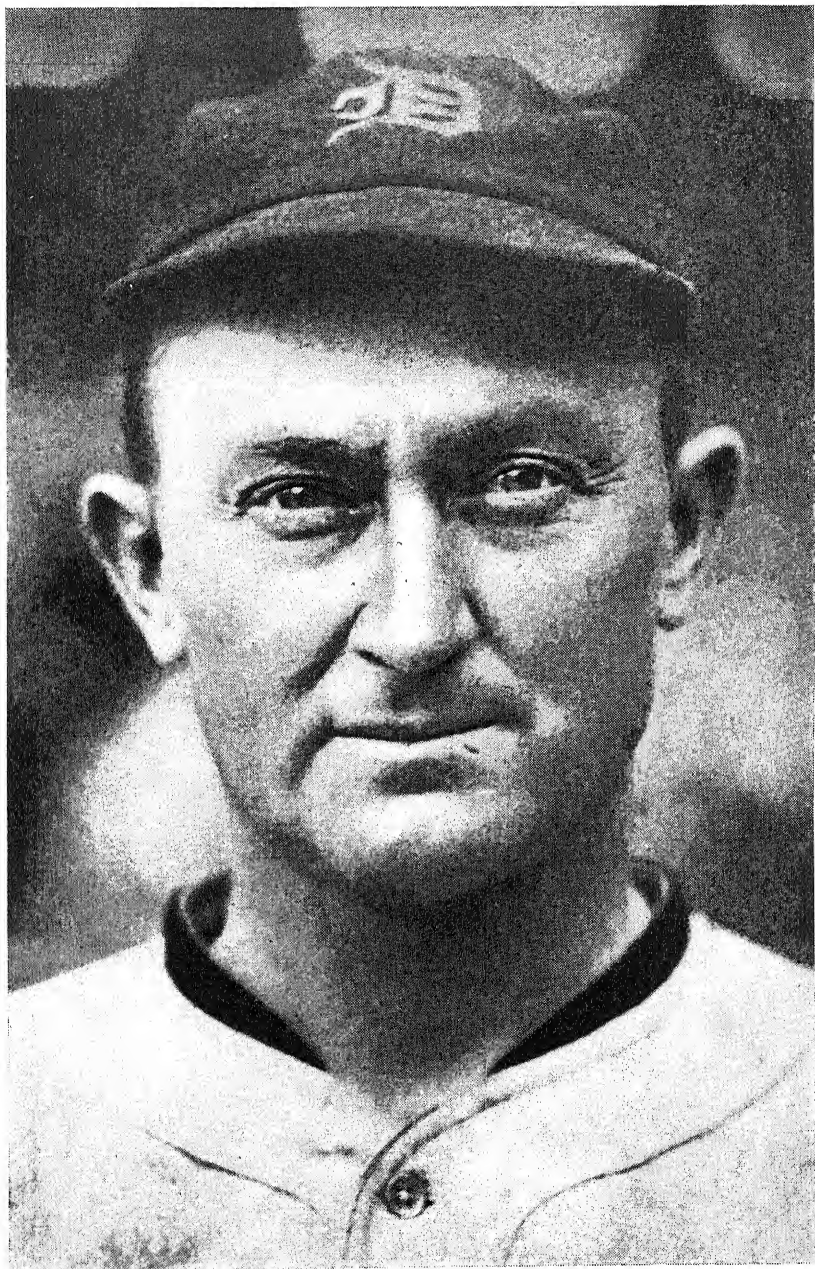
The telephone rings and he rushes for it. His voice, as he speaks into

it, is loud and rasping. "Why, Joe, you old so-and-so! If you don't get right on up here, I'll come down and knock you on your can! Get up, d'ya hear?"

The old ballplayer comes into the room and Cobb thumps him on the back. There is something frantic and terrible about his enthusiasm. You know what it is later, when he quiets down and says, "Joe, you just got to come up to my place in Nevada. Stay as long as you like. I'm all alone up there, just me and the housekeeper. Children all married and gone. Now, what do you say, Joe? How about it?"

But that is not the way to leave him. It is better to leave him at the plate or on the base-paths he ruled like a king for so many years. Leave him on second base, as he was at 19, or 24, or 38—on second and taking a long lead, taunting the pitcher, getting set to spring tigerlike for third. And then, spikes flashing, down he goes, moving with the terrifying speed only he could summon, and then the beautiful fall-away slide.

That is the only way Ty Cobb, the greatest ballplayer of all time, should be remembered.



International

Ty Cobb is the choice of most diamond experts as the all-time player.



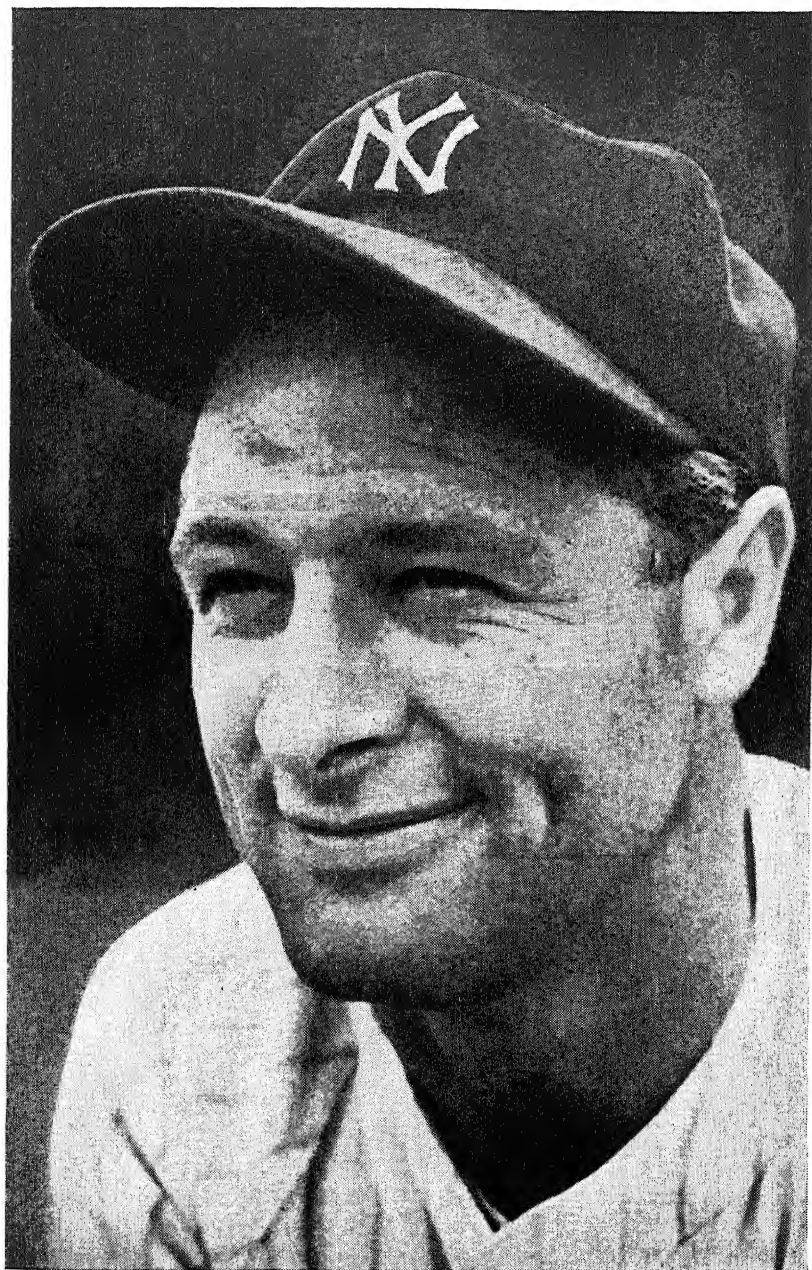
Besides his great hitting and fielding, Ty is remembered for his exploits on the base paths where his speed often broke up tight ball games.

International



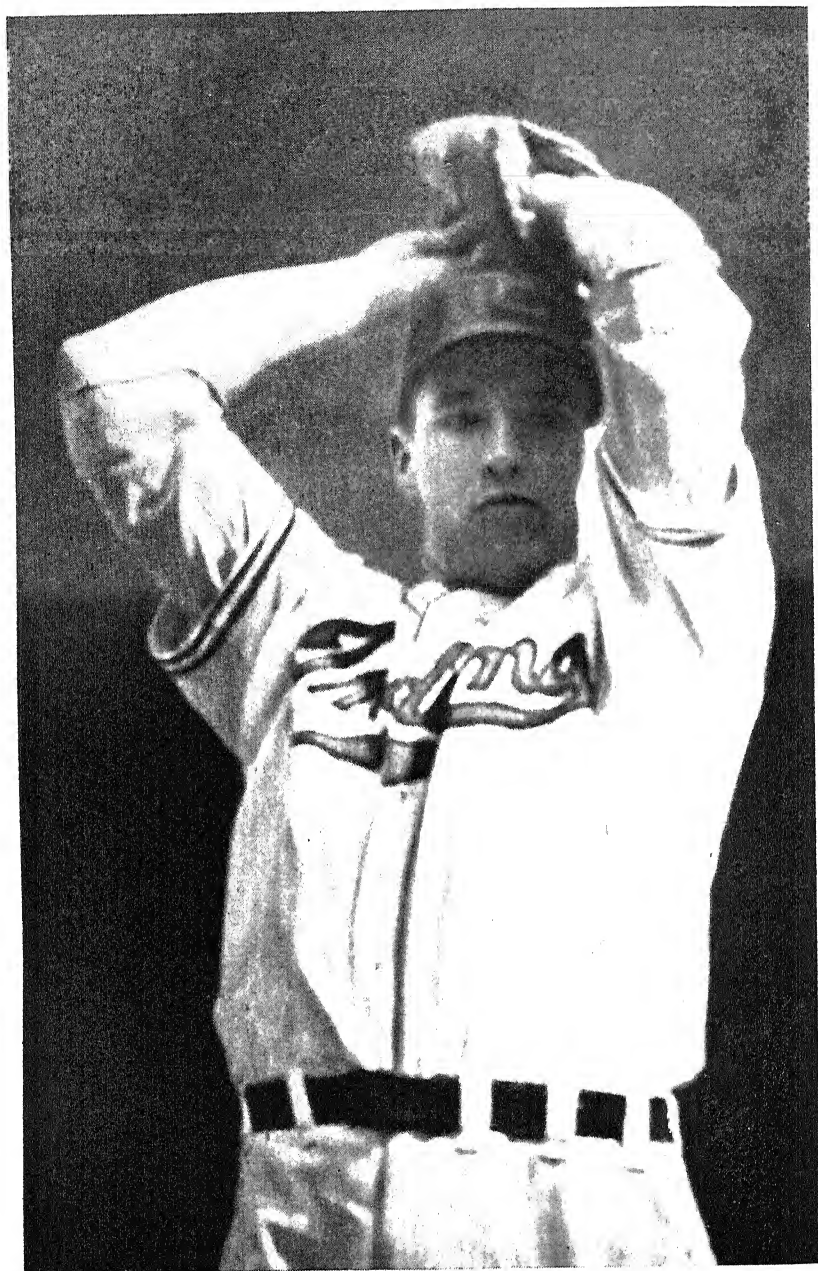
Wide World

McGraw, Cobb, and Hornsby (left to right) dominated game in early 20's.



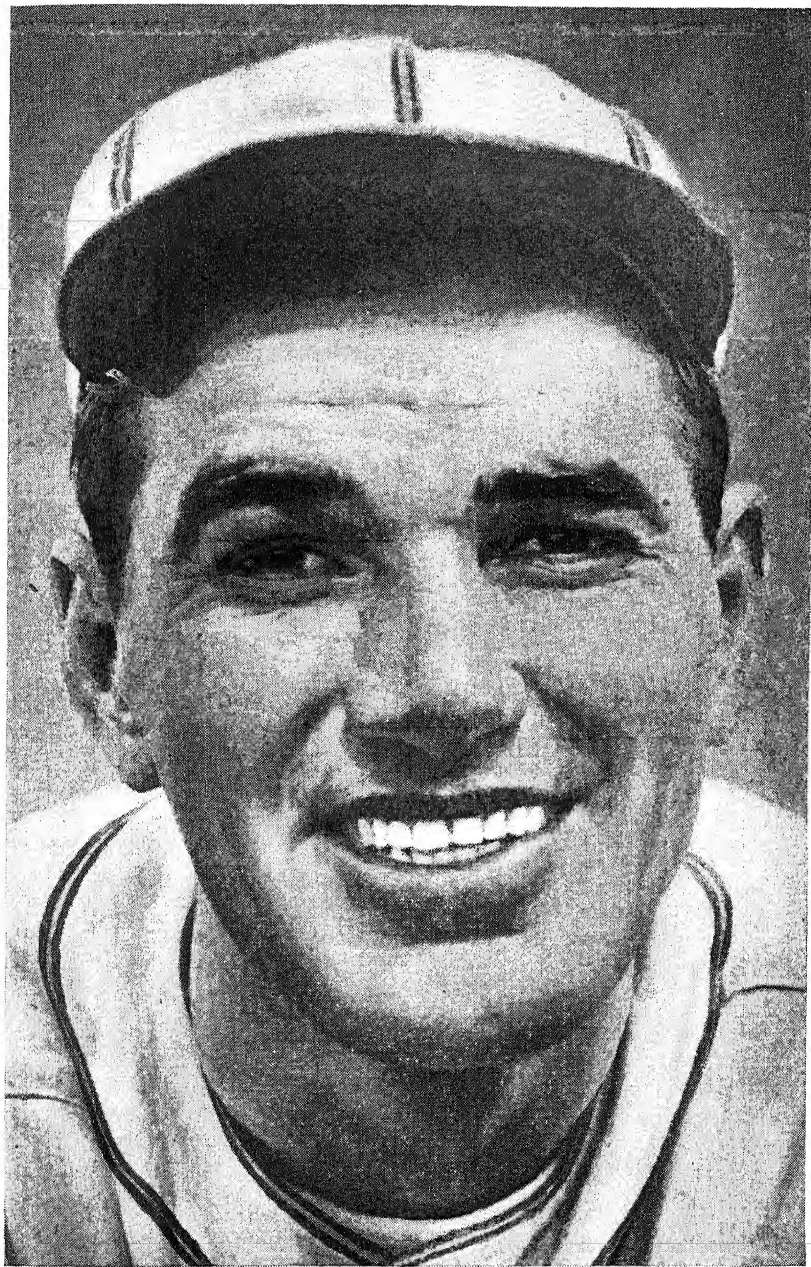
Acme

Lou Gehrig's rare courage overshadowed his achievements on the field.



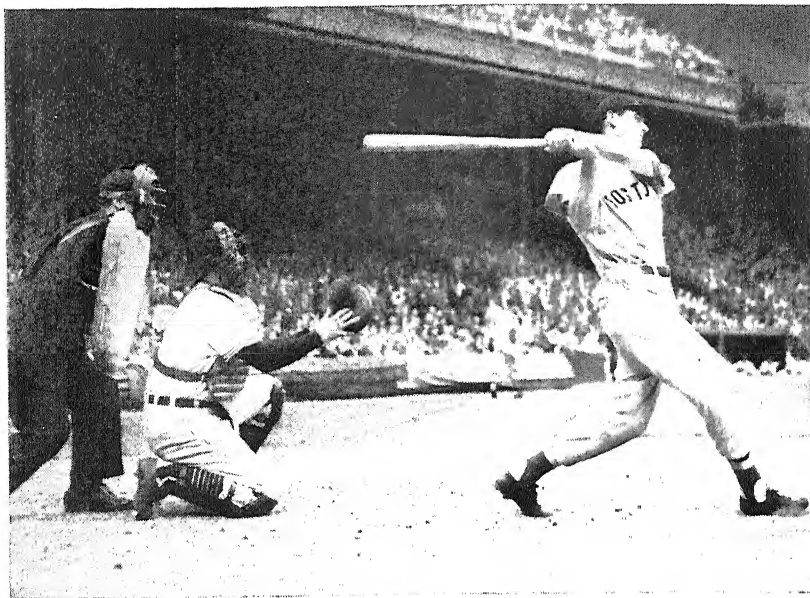
Wide World

Bob Feller rose from Iowa farm boy to baseball's biggest wage-earner.



From a painting by Griffith Foxley

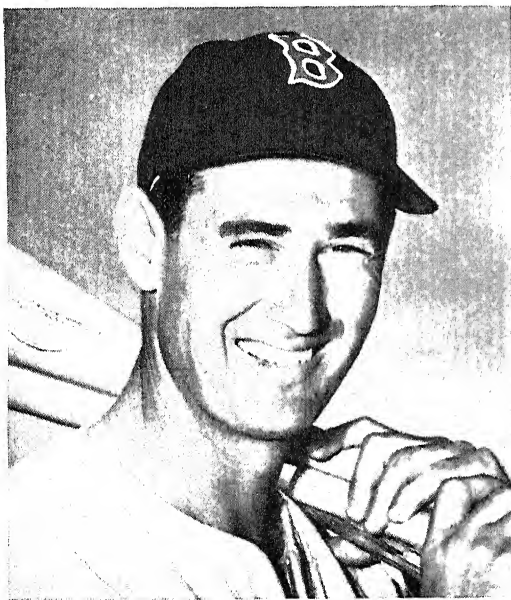
Most famous of the St. Louis Gas House Gang was comical Dizzy Dean.



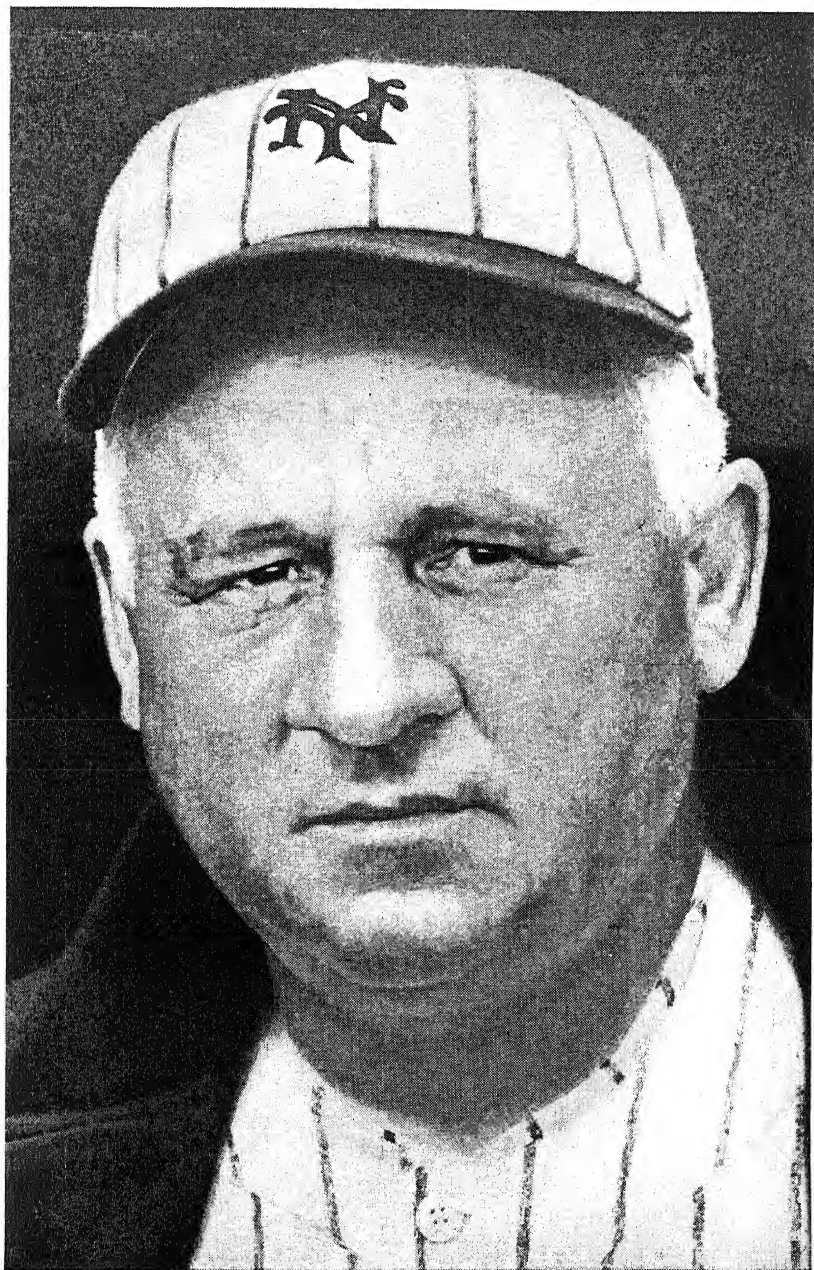
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Ted Williams is the only AL batter since Harry Heilmann to hit .400.

Acme

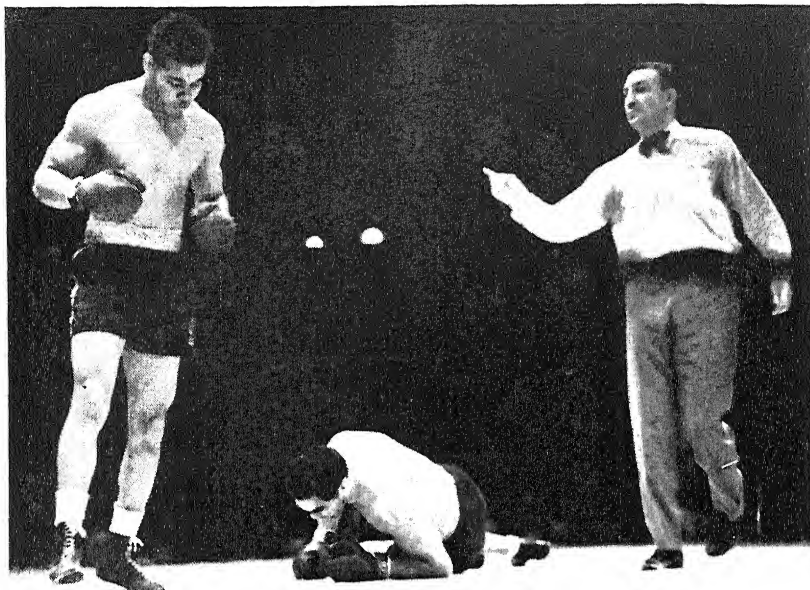


Williams is almost as famous for his temperament as he is for stick-work. Ted can start a controversy as easily as he can get a hit at Fenway Park in Boston.



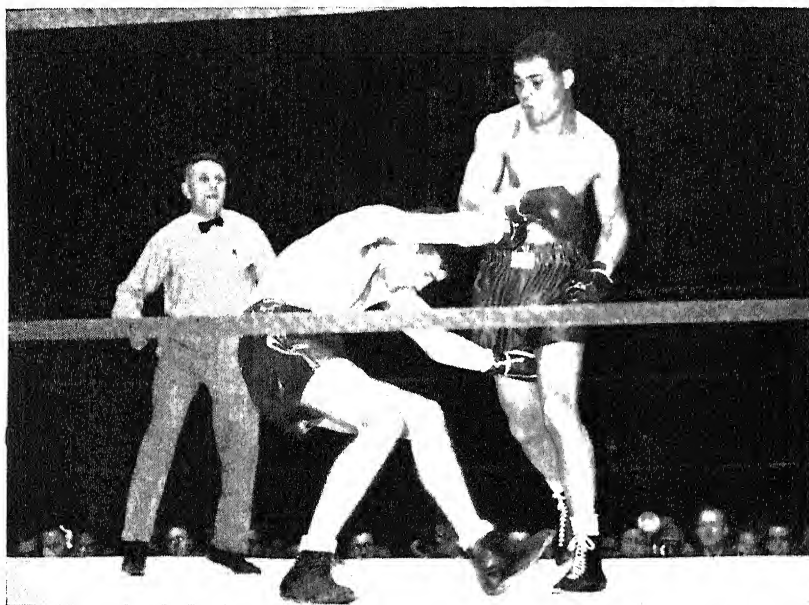
From a painting by Griffith Foxley

Late Giant boss, John McGraw, was a hard-boiled, successful manager.



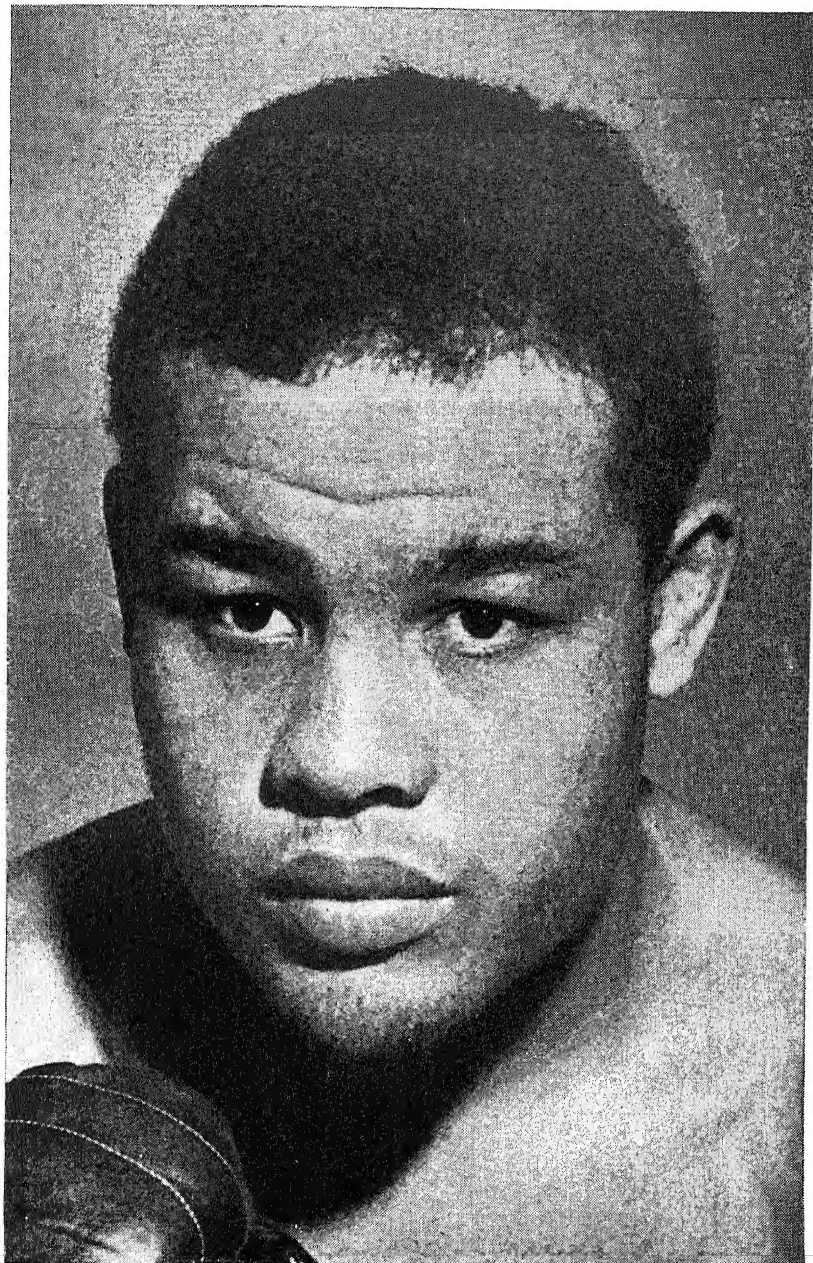
Wide World

In the second fight with Schmeling, Louis won by a kayo in the first round.



Wide World

Joe almost let title slip away in '41 before halting Billy Conn's bid.



Acme

Joe Louis' heavyweight reign was the longest in ring history.



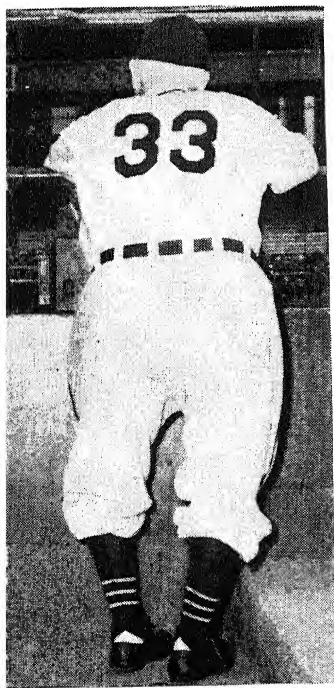
Aeme

Connie Mack's managerial career in baseball dates back to late 1890's.

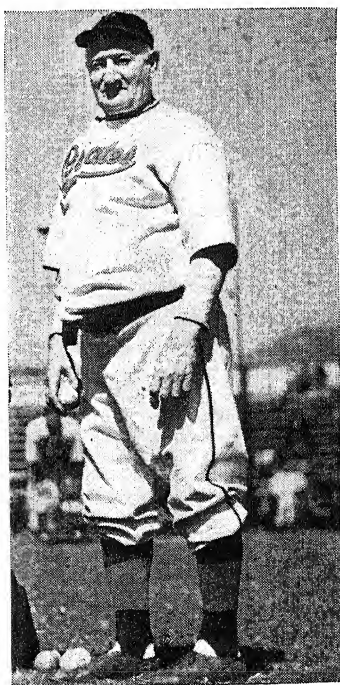


Acme

An all-time shortstop, Wagner was NL batting champ eight years.

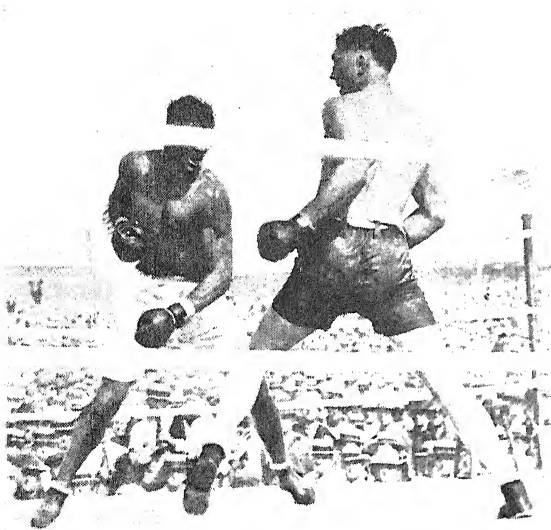


Wide World



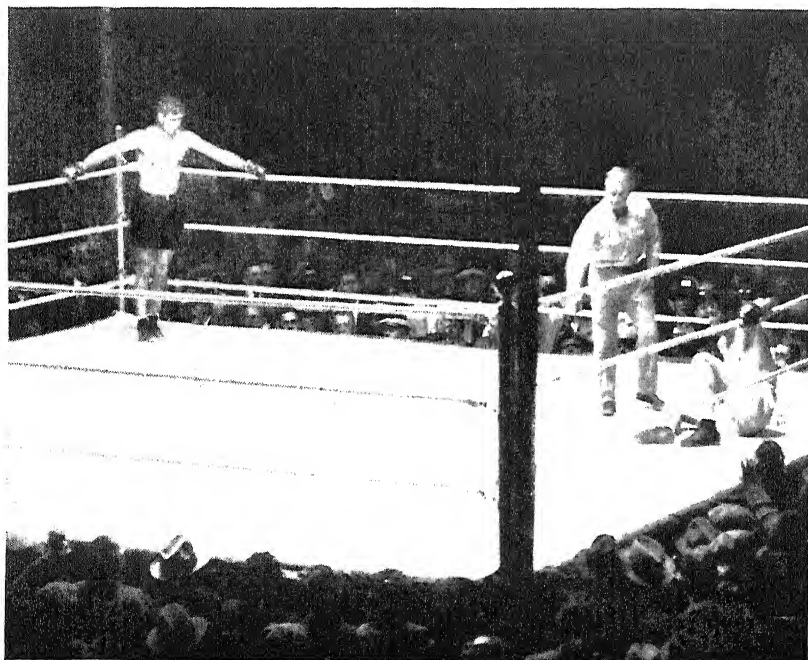
Acme

Honus Wagner is still a familiar figure in uniform as a Pirate coach.



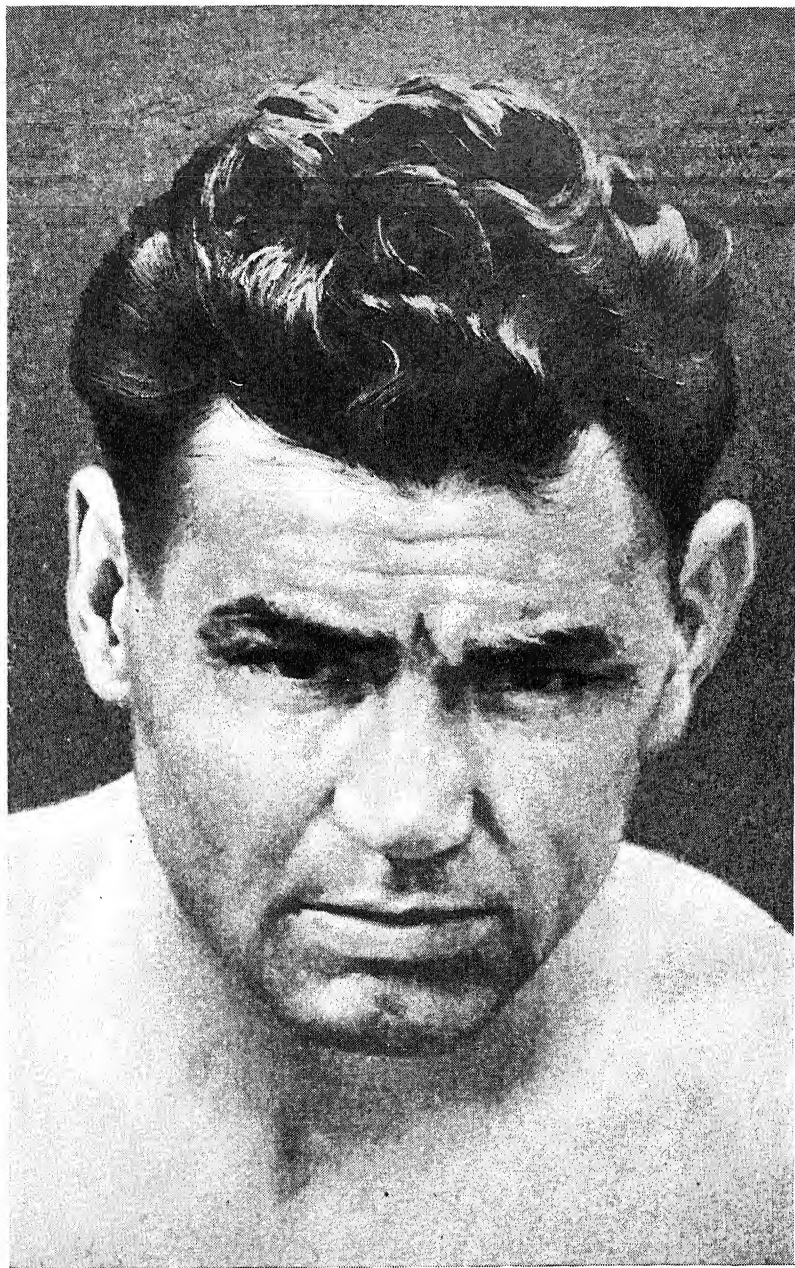
Jack Dempsey (left) took the heavy-weight title from Jess Willard on July 4, 1919, dropping the champ in third round.

International



Wide World

The seventh-round "long count" helped Tunney beat Dempsey in '27 bout.



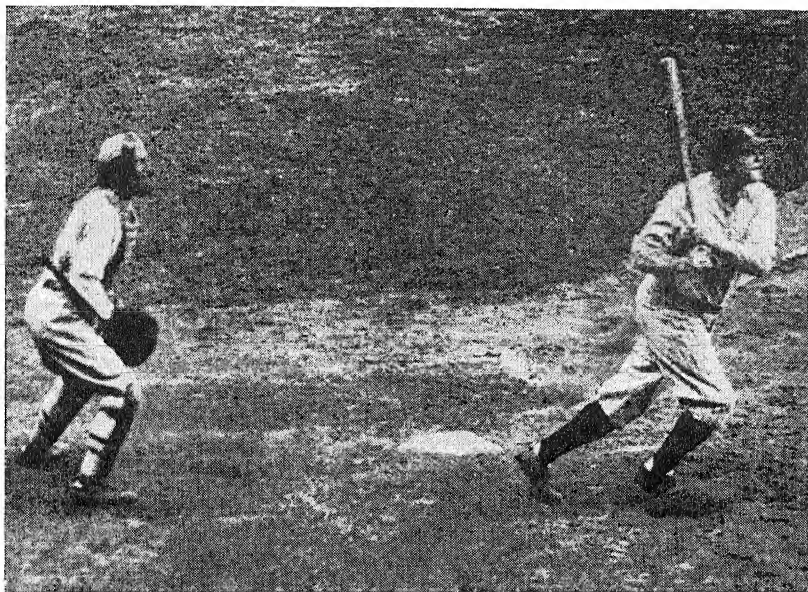
From a painting by Griffith Foxley

Jack Dempsey found a popularity in defeat he'd never known in victory.



From a painting by Griffith Foxley

No one meant more to baseball and fans the world over than Babe Ruth.



Acme

The Babe's famous record of 60 home runs in one season was set in 1927.



Wide World

Ruth's love for kids was exceeded only by the way they worshipped him.

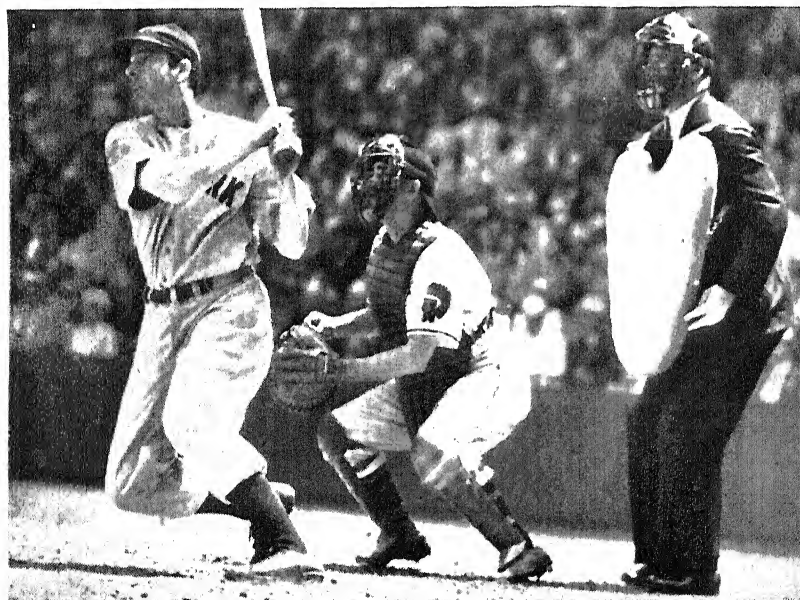


The head of a great baseball family, Joe DiMaggio's matchless play in center field and at bat has sparked the Yankees since 1936.

Wide World

Always near the top in batting, DiMag is one of game's great fielders.

Acme



HEY DiMAG!

The Story of the Yankee Clipper

By Tom Meany

IT WAS early April and although the center-field clock showed there was more than an hour before game-time, the stands were filling up rapidly. This was the first visit of the Red Sox to Yankee Stadium in 1947 and there was a sense of anticipation in the air. The Yanks were just finishing up their batting practice and the Red Sox had not yet come on the field. Joe DiMaggio was leaning on his bat on the steps of the home dugout, talking to a couple of reporters.

A mild cheer of greeting, mingled with a few perfunctory boos, signaled the advent of Boston. As the gray-flannelled players piled up the steps of the dugout on the third base side, DiMaggio stopped talking and looked intently across the diamond. The sixth or seventh Boston player to emerge from the tunnel entrance was a stocky, almost chunky, individual whose eye-glasses bestowed upon him an expression of intense studiousness. He turned toward the Yankee bench and, because of his glasses, seemed to be peering in that direction with myopic concentration.

Joe spotted the newcomer and waved a greeting, calling, "Hey, Di-Mag!"

"Hey, DiMag!" responded the Red Sox player, also waving an arm in recognition.

Thus did the brothers DiMaggio fraternize in their first reunion since their paths crossed briefly in Florida during Spring training.

There have been famous brothers in baseball before. But the DiMaggios, Joe and Dom, are unique in that their personalities follow almost the identical phlegmatic pattern, with emotions rarely showing on the surface.

There were, for instance, the Ferrells. Wes, the pitcher, was capable of great mound performances and equally sensational demonstrations of temper. Rick, the catcher, was quiet, easy-going, and efficient. And

the Meusels. Bob of the Yankees, who was taciturn to the point of being morose, and Emil, who had the curious nickname of Irish, and who went through pennant drives under John McGraw with a smile on his lips and a song in his heart.

And surely there never were two brothers with more widely dissimilar personalities than the Deans, heroes of the St. Louis Cardinals' Gas House Gang. Dizzy's loquaciousness was such that it was inevitable he should wind up as a radio announcer, while it was as great an effort for Paul to mumble a greeting as it would be for the average ballplayer to address the United States Senate. A story about the Deans is worth introducing at this point.

In the fourth game of the 1934 World Series between the Cardinals and the Tigers, Dizzy injected himself into the game as a pinch-runner. He did this entirely without advice of counsel, which is to say Manager Frankie Frisch. He was forced at second base by the next hitter, but in an effort to break up the threatened double play, Diz used his head. And in a most peculiar fashion. He leaped high into the air and was hit squarely on the forehead by the relay of Billy Rogell.

As Dizzy fell flat between the baselines, and the ball caromed away into right field, there was no sound from the packed stands at Sportsman's Park. Eventually a stretcher appeared, and Diz was carried from the arena amid anguished silence. Trotting alongside the stretcher bearers was Paul, looking on the recumbent form of his brother with fraternal concern.

That evening a couple of other writers and myself met Paul in the lobby of a St. Louis hotel. We inquired anxiously as to Dizzy's condition, and he told us Diz would be able to pitch against Detroit the next day.

"Wasn't he unconscious when they took him from the field?" we asked.

"Oh, no," Paul assured us. "He was all right. He was even talking."

"Talking?" we asked. "What was he saying?"

"Nothing," replied Paul. It was one of the finest, and most accurate, descriptions of Diz's conversation anybody ever made.

In comparison with the DiMaggios, the laconic Paul is almost a gabby-gut. There is a story that Joe once took Dom to dinner at a New York restaurant, during his younger brother's first season with the Red Sox. Maybe the story's true, and maybe it isn't, but it serves to point up the reputation of the DiMaggios for conversational thrift.

They seated themselves silently and inspected the menus handed them. Joe gave an order and the waiter turned inquiringly to Dom.

"The same," said Dom.

According to the story, they ate without uttering a word. As they finished their dessert Joe, the host, broke the silence.

"More coffee?" he asked Dom.

"No," replied Dom, adding in what, for him, amounted to a burst of speech, "thanks."

Don't for a second imagine the reticence of Joe DiMaggio and his brother stems from a lack of intelligence. It's just that neither of them has much talent for small talk. You can get a sound, if guarded, opinion from either on any baseball question. Whether Joe, who reached the Yankees as a full-blown star, set the conversational style for the brothers, is a matter of debate. Joe, as a rookie with a great reputation and tremendous publicity preceding him into the majors, was cautious. Schooled by Joe McCarthy, who had an unholy fear of being misquoted in the public press, DiMag avoided committing himself on his own chances of making good in the majors.

The natural result was that the writers covering the Yankees during DiMaggio's first Spring in St. Petersburg concluded he was a dead-pan. They instinctively knew Joe wasn't dumb, and his reactions on the field proved it. DiMag wasn't seeking any extra-curricular publicity and was content to stay in his shell. As he grew to maturity with the Yanks, Joe made several close friendships among sportswriters and those who enjoy his confidence find him an excellent companion. To all, DiMag has been carefully polite. No writer ever has had cause to complain of being brushed off by the Yankee Clipper.

That Dom should be co-starring with him in the American League remains a big surprise to Joe. He explained to me that he still regards Dom as his "skinny kid brother, wearing eye glasses." Vince, who followed Joe into the majors, was playing professional ball in the Coast League when Joe was a sandlotter and Dom a sort of tag-along youngster who hung around on the outer fringes of the games.

"You see, when I went away for my first Spring training trip with San Francisco, Dom was only 15," related Joe, "and none of us ever thought of him as a ballplayer because he was so much smaller than the rest of us and wasn't even playing on any of the neighborhood teams.

"I was in my second year with the Yanks when I heard Dom had been signed by San Francisco, the club Vince and I had broken in with. Everybody, or it seemed that way, accused Charley Graham of signing Dom only because he already had two brothers in the majors and the Seals wanted to cash in on the publicity. Then I read a story quoting Lefty O'Doul, for whom I have a great respect, to the effect that Dom was a better ballplayer than either Vince or I was at the same stage of our development. Remember that at this time I'd never seen Dom in a baseball uniform.

"Graham was hot on Dom from the start. He switched him from short-stop to the outfield, and Dom took to it almost at once. Graham told me he could come in on a ground ball like an infielder and take a drive over

his shoulder like Jigger Statz, who was a Coast outfielding hero for years. I still had to see Dom to believe it."

Despite Joe's interest in his kid brother, he had to follow him by ear for a few years. Dom had completed his second year with the Seals before Joe got a chance to see him play in a post-season game. Joe believes it was the same game in which Joe Cronin, the Boston boss, saw Dominic for the first time.

Cronin, a fellow San Franciscan, had received glowing reports on the talents of the youngest of the DiMaggios. But, like so many ballplayers, he had a prejudice against eye-glasses. Incidentally, and quite apart from this story, it may be said that Dom's success has made the path lots easier for bespectacled ballplayers. Since Dom made good, whopping big prices have been paid for minor-leaguers with glasses, such as Billy Rigney of the Giants and Earl Torgeson of the Braves.

Where Dominic is concerned, Joe is something of a split personality. On one side he sees Dom as his kid brother, and is understandably proud of his success. On the other he sees him as a fellow professional, and makes a sound impersonal appraisal of his assets.

Dominic's outfielding stance is rather unorthodox. He stands with his left foot toward home plate, his body facing the left fielder. This enables him to get a terrific jump on balls hit behind him and he has pulled down many a line drive, not merely fly balls, which seemed destined to go over his head for extra bases. Dom charges ground balls like a short-stop and his throwing arm is deadly, perhaps the best of all the DiMaggios. Which is high praise indeed, for both Joe and Vince have exceptional arms.

Joe was a little surprised at Dom's stance but never attempted to have him alter it. "It suited Dom," explained the elder brother, "and he apparently knew what he was doing."

Concerning his ability to handle ground balls, Joe has only the highest praise for Dom. "I was certain he was charging ground balls too recklessly but I haven't seen one go through him yet," declared Joe. "Even when he doesn't field the ball cleanly, he blocks it with either the heel of his glove or his wrists so it's right in front of him for a recovery."

In the exuberance surrounding the first Red Sox pennant in almost three decades, there were many Boston writers in 1946 who advanced the claim that Dom, rather than Joe, was *the* DiMag, that he had succeeded the Yankee Clipper to the pre-eminent baseball position in the family. On the face of it, there was much to justify their claim, most of it because of a negative performance by Joe.

Dom had his best year since coming into the majors that season while Joe, beset by marital and financial troubles, had his poorest. Dom outhit the Clipper by 26 points, .316 to .290, but Joe, as usual, had the

"wood" on his side. He out-homered his kid brother, 25 to seven, and drove in more runs, 95 against 73. And the way Joe slipped back into the pre-war groove in '48 when he hit a steady .320 and led the majors in RBI's with .156 made it evident that Dom, at the plate, never will be any more than a light carbon copy of Joe. In the field, the younger brother has more speed than Joe, can go farther for a ball, and throw more accurately.

Despite their affection, the brothers do not see too much of each other, except for the 22 games the Red Sox and Yanks play against each other. Joe, when his marriage went on the rocks, made several valiant attempts at reconciliation, all of which went down the drain in the Summer of 1946 when his wife remarried.

With the breach between him and his wife beyond bridging, Joe turned all his love to his son, Little Joe, who is now well past his seventh birthday.

DiMag spends most of the off season in the comparative solitude of a New York hotel room. Occasional visits with Little Joe are the closest he comes to enjoying the life of a father.

Joe, of course, is not without friends in the big city. But he's no social butterfly and is inclined to be highly selective in his close friendships. Jimmy Ceres, an intimate pal of DiMag's ever since Joe broke into the majors, chauffeurs Little Joe around on visits to his dad.

Ceres is a character in his own right. Outside of the fact that he lives in Newark and seems comfortably off, little is known of Jimmy. The general contours of his profile suggest he may once have been in the ring. He idolizes Joe and Little Joe and his car is their accepted mode of transportation around New York. It is Jimmy who drives Little Joe to the ball park after he has deposited his pop there first.

"Little Joe is getting so he can tell me exactly which turns to make to get to Yankee Stadium," Ceres proudly told Joe. "If I try to fool him by taking a different route, he tells me we're not going in the right direction."

"That's because the kid is smarter than you are, Jimmy," kidded DiMag.

"Could be," agreed the faithful Jimmy, beaming happily.

Big Joe is quite conscious of his parental duties toward Little Joe. And it may truthfully be said that because Little Joe has the run of the Yankee locker room, the Yanks are one of the least profane clubs in baseball. Ballplayers are an earthy lot, and their language at times is salty and picturesque. Out of deference to the DiMaggios, father and son, the boys are on their good behavior most of the time. And the Clipper is mighty careful to see that Little Joe is seen but not heard.

Little Joe, for a small boy, handles a baseball cleverly, although this may be entirely due to the number of afternoons he spends at Yankee

Stadium, and not from inherent skill. When he was posed by a photographer with his dad, each in a batting stance, it was noted that Little Joe gravely copied his father, holding the bat at the end, resting it on his right shoulder, feet spread wide apart.

People who know both Dom and Joe fairly well, and are asked to compare their personalities, are likely to answer something like this: "Well, neither talks much but Dom is more sensible than Joe."

This analysis is somewhat unfair to Joe and is usually based upon the tangled status of his business affairs, a tangle caused by circumstances rather than by any lack of sense on the part of the Clipper. To understand the tangled web, you have to go back a few years and remember the DiMaggios were divorced while Joe was in service.

DiMaggio enlisted in the Army Air Forces after the 1942 World Series. All that season there had been rumors he and his wife were splitting up, but every separation was followed by a reconciliation. Every one but the last, that is, and that culminated in a Nevada divorce. Joe made a cash settlement and agreed to contribute to the support of Little Joe.

Since the divorce was granted while the Clipper was in service, Mrs. DiMaggio had all his business papers. And until Joe returned from the Panama training camp in 1946 he still entertained hopes they would remarry, so the files remained in her possession.

When Mrs. DiMaggio married George Schubert, a Wall Street broker, she turned over all the papers to Joe. The result was the Clipper wound up in a hotel room full of steel filing cabinets. Aside from the entangled matter of squaring his income tax for 1942, Joe paid little attention to his business affairs. He changed legal representatives almost as often as he changed suits.

Living out of a suitcase, as the Clipper was most of the time, it was inevitable that papers should become lost or mislaid. One of the missing papers was a contract he had with the publisher of his autobiography. The book, which has sold 50,000 copies, a remarkable number for a sports book, has not been profitable to Joe, as a result of the missing contract and the peculiar involvements with the publisher, who had the book printed but did not handle its distribution. It took a year and a new arrangement with the distributor before Joe got any returns from the book at all.

Dominic has had no such tangled skein to unravel as Joe. When Dom went into service he left no loose ends dangling behind him. He has only the usual financial problems that confront every young husband trying to make his way in the world. The suspicion persists, however, that the younger brother is somewhat more of a realist.

Dom received a fair return for permitting the use of his nickname (The Little Professor) in a cartoon in a Boston daily in 1946, although the cartoon contained nothing more dynamic than Dom, wearing a pro-

fessor's mortarboard, holding a thermometer showing the number of victories Boston required to win 102 games, the total he had predicted for them. The Red Sox won 104.

Dom met Emily Frederick, pretty Boston socialite, in 1943 and they were married after the 1948 season. He has always enjoyed more home life than Joe. Before his marriage, Dom always spent the Winter with the DiMaggio family in San Francisco.

For all Joe's making New York his permanent residence, the DiMaggios remain a close-knit, cohesive family. Papa DiMaggio still waits up for the morning papers to read the box scores and see how his sons are doing. When Joe was the only one in the majors, the old man would refuse to eat if Joe went hitless. During Christmas in '48, Joe, Dom and his bride, and Vince with his wife and two children gathered at the DiMaggio home at 2150 Beach Street in San Francisco for the holidays. It was the first Christmas since the Winter before the war that Joe had been home.

There were nine children in the DiMaggio family, four girls and five boys. Of the boys, it was the three youngest who became professional baseball players. The reason only the last three DiMaggios took to baseball is understandable enough. The family was becoming more Americanized, and the younger kids didn't have to pitch in and work as many hours with the family fishing enterprise as their older brothers. Joe's instant success in professional baseball won over his parents to the game, which they looked upon with suspicion when Vince began playing in the Coast League.

Although the DiMaggios were traditionally a family of fishermen, the sea, as a commercial proposition, never appealed to Joe. The small smack, loaded to the gunwales with the day's catch, was a trifle too odoriferous for the Clipper, who had a queasy stomach even as a kid.

"I really couldn't take fishing as a business," explained Joe, "although I always liked to fish for fun and still do. It used to make my pop sore when I told him the smell of the boat made me sick and I don't know whether his pride was hurt over the fact that I wasn't a dawn to dusk fisherman, like the rest of the family, or because he considered it a disgrace that a DiMaggio should admit to having a weak stomach.

"Dom, however, was different. Smaller and younger than I, the kid thought nothing of pitching in with the rest of the family. On their fishing trips, he was a great deal more help than I was. My share of the work was usually done on land, mending the nets and helping clean the boat. I was glad when I was able to pick up a few pennies selling papers and helped out the family that way. Pop said I finally got a job that suited me when I peddled papers. I had nothing to do but stand still and holler."

Sandlot games on Sundays started to make some money for Vince,

more than Joe was getting for peddling papers at the top of his lungs, and then Joe began to eye the Sunday games as a profession, rather than a lark. He, too, began playing ball for what was literally coffee-and-cake money.

While Vince played for a San Francisco farm club at Tucson, Arizona, Joe started playing serious baseball in a local Boys' Club League. From there Joe progressed to the Sunset Produce team in a Class A league, and in 18 games for that club he put together a fancy .623 batting average. That lofty figure won him a pair of expensive spikes, the first good ones he'd ever owned.

Vince, meanwhile, was knocking down fences at Tucson, but soon found himself out of a job when the whole league collapsed. Recalled by the Seals, he stuck with Charlie Graham's club for the rest of the season.

When the Seals needed a shortstop to finish out the last few games of the 1932 season, Vince recommended Joe for the job. Joe got it, played three games at the spot Frankie Crosetti had vacated to go to the New York Yankees, and hit .222. One of Joe's two hits was a lusty triple. In all, he went to bat nine times. He also threw the ball into the grandstand once, pegging to first.

But the Seals invited him to show up for Spring training in 1933, and Joe was content. He didn't expect anyone to hand him a contract on a silver platter, but he was going to get his chance.

Joe, of course, eventually displaced Vince on the Seals. Vince was released after Joe made good in the San Francisco outfield. In his first year in professional ball, before he was 19 years old, DiMaggio astounded not only the Pacific Coast League but the nation as well by hitting in 61 consecutive games before he was stopped by Ed Walsh of Oakland, son of Big Ed Walsh, the old-time White Sox spitball artist.

When the spotlight centered on Joe's batting streak, it was inevitable that the DiMaggio family should be caught in the outer perimeter of its white glare. Papa DiMaggio beamed proudly to his neighbors. His boy Joe was making good against what he called "grown men" and furthermore, getting well paid for it. Joe was making \$225 a month.

Papa DiMaggio was so interested in Joe's baseball exploits he even forgot about the old Italian game, bocci—which may be said to resemble lawn bowling.

"Bocci ball?" he laughed. "No money in bocci ball. Baseball, that's the game." It wasn't long before Joe's father was proven a very smart man.

Even after the family had revelled in Joe's successes with the Yanks, and when Vince followed him to the majors, they weren't too keen about Dom becoming a ballplayer. His pop wanted Dom, with his eyeglasses and the owlshly studious expression they gave him, to become a lawyer. Young Dom had his heart set on joining Joe and Vince in the majors.

San Francisco is possibly a city without peer for civic loyalty and sports-consciousness, and it was only natural the DiMaggios should become something of an institution around town as a result of the family's baseball fame. Indeed, when Joe first came up to the Yankees, his home runs were deemed of sufficient civic importance to be broadcast over the police radio system. Because of the four-hour time difference and the fact that there were no night games in the American League in 1936, at high noon San Francisco prowls cars would be informed, "DiMag has hit another." This information was broadcast on no fewer than 29 occasions in Joe's freshman season with the Yankees.

Although Joe and Vince played against each other only occasionally, and then just in exhibition games, the Clipper and Dom have had many a brush. The Little Professor has robbed Joe of many an extra base hit and at one time threatened the extinction of the remarkable batting streak of 56 consecutive games which Joe compiled in 1941.

On July 1 that season, against the Red Sox, DiMaggio tied the 43-year-old record of Wee Willie Keeler by hitting safely in both games of a doubleheader to run his string to 44 straight games. Playing the Red Sox again next day, the Clipper belted a long drive against Heber Newsome, but Stan Spence hauled it down after a long run. On his next trip, Joe again connected solidly, but this time it was Dom who gave chase and made a remarkable catch of the drive.

By this time DiMaggio was desperate. He had tagged Newsome twice and each time a phenomenal catch had deprived him of a hit. And one of the catches was by his own kid brother, who had accepted a dinner date to come to Joe's home that night! On his third try, the Clipper settled everything by hitting the ball into the seats for a home run. There was nothing the outfielders could do about that one except watch it sail into the stands. That home run made it 45 straight games for Joe, eclipsing Keeler's record of 44, which had been set in 1897. From there, the Clipper went on to make it 56 games in a row.

Joe's amazing streak was immortalized in a song that Fall. Written by Alan Courtney (words) and Ben Homer (music) it was arranged and recorded by bandleader Les Brown and immediately swept the country. "Joltin' Joe DiMaggio," the song was called, and the most easily remembered refrain went something like this: "Joltin' Joe DiMaggio, we want you on our side."

Everybody in baseball still would like to have Joe on his side. Ballplayers like the Yankee Clipper are rare indeed.

Although Joe is an exceptional fielder in his own right, it has been Dom who has turned in the fielding performances at his brother's expense. For one thing, of course, Joe, being the stronger batter, drives more long balls into Dom's territory than Dom does into his. And the Little Professor can cover more ground than Joe can now.

There are many baseball men who believe the Red Sox might have won the 1946 World Series if Dom hadn't injured his leg in the seventh game. The youngster doubled off the right field wall in the top half of the eighth to tie the game at 3-3, but he pulled up lame at second base and had to be relieved by Leon Culberson, who then went to center-field at the end of the inning.

Harry Walker's hit to left center, on which Enos Slaughter made his electrifying dash to score all the way from first with the winning run in the eighth, was not a well-hit ball. It was scored as a double but it was no more than a long single at best. Harry was fooled on the pitch, didn't get all the way around on the ball and didn't get the fat part of his bat on the ball.

Culberson didn't come up with the ball as quickly as DiMaggio would have, although he did get it to Pesky in time to nail the flying Slaughter at the plate if Johnny hadn't hesitated with the relay. And had the ball been fielded by Dom instead of Culberson, there would have been no relay, for Dom's arm is strong enough and accurate enough to have made such a throw directly to the plate. Slaughter told Dom he wouldn't have tried for home, if Dom had been playing.

All the foregoing is, of course, mere supposition and isn't meant to detract from the gallant triumph of the Cardinals in that series nor from the brilliant run of Slaughter. It is mentioned here only to stress what an important part Dom plays in the fortunes of the Red Sox.

The importance of brother Joe to the fortunes of the Yankees has been mentioned so often it is now taken for granted. Admitting the years have slowed up the Clipper somewhat, he still retains the relative position in the Yankee scheme of things he did before he went into service, when the Bombers won six pennants in his first seven seasons with the club.

Consumed with a burning ambition to erase the so-so season of 1946, DiMaggio hustled himself back into the lineup before he really was ready in the Spring of 1947. He played for a couple of weeks with his left foot in a high shoe to protect it after the Winter operation on his heel. Joe broke into the lineup with a three-run homer in Philadelphia when the season was less than a week old.

After that first opening blast, however, it was obvious Joe had returned too soon. He was hitting, but not in a manner calculated to chase pitchers to the storm cellars. Nevertheless, Harris realized DiMag wanted to be in the ball game every day, and he had the assurance of Dr. Mal Stevens there was no danger of Joe aggravating his post-operational troubles.

Because he had little Spring training, none at all unless you want to count a few hours with a carpet slipper at St. Pete, DiMaggio took all the batting practice he could. This led to a blow-off with the impetuous Yankee president, Larry MacPhail, when one afternoon Joe refused to

pose for some Army recruiting service pictures. DiMag claimed he couldn't spare the time from his hitting drill, and MacPhail slapped a fine of \$100 on DiMaggio.

Though it's old stuff by now, the story of that fine and its repercussions is worth telling because it illustrates the kind of man Joe is.

There were other Yanks fined too, but none was tagged as heavily as the Clipper. It was the first fine he'd been handed in his life. The news was announced on May 21. There were scandalized outbursts in the press, one sports columnist going so far as to say the fine was DiMaggio's reward for his loyalty to the Yanks.

In a game at Yankee Stadium against the Tigers that night, before 67,677 people, DiMaggio came to bat against Hal Newhouser with the bases filled and promptly emptied them by lining a double to left. It was his answer to MacPhail's fine.

A couple of nights later, playing against the Red Sox in the Stadium, the pregame show consisted of a home run contest for both left- and right-handed hitters of the two clubs. Ted Williams, of course, powdered a few into the right-field stands and won the contest for left-handers without any trouble, but none of the right-handers was able to hit a ball into the seats in left and the \$100 prize was not awarded.

That, however, was in practice. Came the ball game and the Clipper caught hold of one of Joe Dobson's curves with two on, and drove it into the left field stands for a home run. He was now in the midst of a batting streak, which later lasted through 15 games, and red hot. He also was red hot about the fine. MacPhail, in a fine gesture of magnanimity, announced that since none of the right-handed batters had hit the ball into the seats during practice, and since DiMaggio was the first to do it in the game, the \$100 would go to the Clipper. When Secretary Red Patterson handed Joe the check, Joe handed it back and told him to donate it to the Damon Runyon Cancer Relief Fund.

Never did the Clipper start a season more meekly nor finish one more heroically than he did in 1947. He began by hobbling to an airplane to take him to Puerto Rico, knowing full well that he wouldn't be able to put on a baseball suit for six weeks or any sort of shoe for a month. And he ended up in October as one of the heroes of another Yankee World Championship.

The Yanks won the 1947 pennant for Bucky Harris with a drive which started in early July, before the All-Star game, and lasted nearly a month without defeat. The Yankees won 19 consecutive games in this streak and when the streak was ended so, to all intents and purposes, was the 1947 American League pennant race. The Yankees were so far in front there was no catching them and it was DiMaggio's bat, plus his sensational fielding, which wrapped up the flag for them.

Fielding excellence, however, is something Joe doesn't care to hear too

much about in connection with the 1947 Series. Although DiMaggio made a couple of fine catches himself in the games and hit two tremendous home runs at Ebbets Field, Joe will remember the '47 Series principally for the catch little Al Gionfriddo of the Dodgers made at his expense in the sixth game at Yankee Stadium.

With the Dodgers enjoying a three-run lead in the sixth inning, DiMaggio came up with two on and two out. The Clipper really tied into one of Joe Hatten's pitches and sent it whistling toward the visitors' bull pen in left. The tiny Gionfriddo, who had just been sent out there at the start of the inning, raced desperately to the barrier. Twice he turned in pursuit of the ball, to finally bring it down at the very rim of the stands, banging into the bull pen barrier as he made the catch in his gloved right hand.

Anything short of this miraculous effort by Gionfriddo and DiMaggio would have had a three-run homer, the Yankees a tie score and very probably a World Series victory in six games. As it was, they had to go to the seventh game before downing the doughty Dodgers.

Jim Farley, the former Postmaster General, who in 1940 came closer to buying the Yankees than most people realize, wrote a foreword for Joe's autobiography in which he emphasized that the rise of the Yankee Clipper, and of his brothers, to national prominence was truly a story of American life. Farley, a keen sports fan and once member of the New York State Athletic Commission, pointed out that the early life of these children of immigrant parents was far from luxurious and that Joe, using his baseball skill as a crowbar, was able to raise the status not only of himself but of his entire family.

The DiMaggios came to this country from Palermo, Sicily, in 1902, a dozen years before Joe was born. As the children came and the family grew, it became difficult to make much headway. As Joe himself frankly says, "We had to scratch for what we got." It's undoubtedly because of the hardships of these early days that only the three youngest boys turned to baseball. The older ones had no time for play.

When the Clipper was in his first World Series with the Yankees in 1936, he brought his mother and his older brother, Tom, from the Coast. Baseball was pretty intricate stuff for Mama DiMaggio, but she knew from the cheers that her son was something special in New York. When Tom took her on a tour of the Italian section of the city, and the people there discovered she was the mother of Jolting Joe, the attentions showered upon her must have given her tremendous satisfaction.

When you look at the rangy, square shouldered Joe, you can sense his physical power immediately but Dom is deceptive. He looks small but he isn't. The younger DiMag is five feet, nine inches tall, and weighs 175 pounds. His shoulders are well muscled, his wrists and forearms strong. His build, in short, is that of an athlete.

While Joe is warily cautious and restrained in his appraisal of Dom's baseball ability, Dom pulls no punches when he's talking about his big brother. Asked by Al Hirshberg, Boston author, after the war about Joe, Dom replied, "If he can come back and play as well as he did before he went into service, he'll be what I've always considered him—the greatest outfielder who ever lived!"

Admitting Dom undoubtedly was swayed by family pride in his estimate, there are American League ballplayers today who consider Joe the greatest outfielder they ever saw. They'll listen politely to your stories of Cobb and Speaker and Ruth, but they never saw those stars. They have, however, seen Joe, and they'll settle for him.

Dom still gets a quiet chuckle out of the surprise he handed Joe by becoming a big-leaguer. "I remember after my first season in the Coast League, when Joe came home for the Winter," recalled Dom. "He was being interviewed over the radio by Ernie Smith, who asked Joe what he thought of me playing with the Seals.

"Joe answered slowly, apparently taking plenty of time to think. He wanted to give me the best of it, I guess, and at the same time he wanted to be fair. He finally said, 'Well, with those thick glasses and all, and his smallness, I don't think Dom will be a professional ballplayer for long, not in the major leagues anyway.' I was home and heard the whole thing."

Although younger than Joe, Dom has more poise with his public than the Clipper. Joe is genuinely embarrassed when autograph seekers gang up on him in public places, and as a result he takes most of his meals in Shor's, where most of the customers know him and where he can dine in peace, talking to Eddie Duchin or some other friends. When the autograph hounds catch up with Dom away from the ball park, he escapes molestation by explaining he doesn't get many chances to go out and would like to be alone. He finds this works out nicely, and nobody's feelings are hurt.

Because DiMaggio spends his Winters at loose ends around New York, the Clipper's name has bobbed up frequently in the Broadway columns. This is inevitable, and gives many people the erroneous impression Joe is a playboy. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Although not a teetotaler, a couple of bottles of beer constitutes a big night for DiMag, who, incidentally, has very definite ideas on playboys.

"You can't be a playboy and a ballplayer at the same time," Joe once remarked to me. "And it isn't entirely the sleep that playboys lose which harms them. Most of them get to the point where their fun is more important to them than baseball. They're playing ball with only half of themselves. When they should be bearing down and concentrating on the game, they're thinking of what they're going to do afterward."

Although those who don't know Joe are inclined to look down their

noses when they come across his name in a Broadway column, they're really doing him an injustice. Except in the offseason, or after a night game, the Clipper observes the curfew along with the rest of the ball club.

Immediately after his wife remarried, Joe's name was linked romantically with not one but several girls by gossip columnists. He made a mild beef and was brought up sharply by Dorothy Kilgallen, able daughter of a most able newspaperman, Jim Kilgallen. Miss Kilgallen wrote, in effect, that if Joe didn't wish his name mentioned in her column or in others, all he had to do was stay out of the spotlight and seek dinner partners who weren't already known because of stage, screen, or radio careers. The Clipper reluctantly admitted Dorothy was right.

One trait the DiMaggios have in common is the ability to avoid rhubarbs in their baseball. They play it straight. Dom jumped to his feet one day two seasons ago at Fenway Park to argue with plate Umpire Jim Boyer, and veteran Red Sox chroniclers such as Burt Whitman declared it was the first time they could recall Dom getting hot over an umpire's decision.

When Joe first came up with the Yankees, he had one minor brush in Cleveland. The Clipper went into second to break up a double play and Bill Knickerbocker let the ball go right at Joe's noggin. Earle Combs coaching at first, Lou Gehrig, who had forced DiMag, and Tony Lazzeri, who had bounced off the bench, all were boiling around the infield. The late Lou Kolls, who was umpiring that day, averted a riot by advising all within earshot of his voice, which meant everybody in the ball park, that: "It costs a C-note per punch in this league."

Tempers were rather frayed in the 1941 Yankee-Dodger World Series, particularly after the third strike episode in the fourth game when Mickey Owen let a pitch get away from him and the Yanks won a game seemingly not only lost, but over.

When Whit Wyatt, who won the only Brooklyn victory in the Series, walked Joe Gordon in the fifth game, he slammed his glove on the mound in protest against Umpire Bill McGowan's decision. Manager Leo Durocher bounded off the bench to protest and others joined him as a matter of course. When the debate subsided, without McGowan having yielded an inch, the irrepressible Lefty Gomez tossed a towel from the Yankee bench to signalize that the Dodgers were cry-babies.

Whatever the Dodgers were, they weren't ones to pass up an argument. For the rest of the afternoon, taunts and insults flew from one bench to the other. When DiMag came to bat in the fifth, Tommy Henrich had just homered to make it 3-1 in favor of the Yankees. The Clipper was greeted with the traditional Dodger war cry, a threat which made Brooklyn one of the most hated teams in the National League that season: "Stick the ball in the bum's ear!"

Wyatt got a couple uncomfortably close to Joe but the Clipper stood up there and drove the next ball to Pete Reiser in deep center. As he was jogging back to the Yankee bench, which was on the third base side of the infield, Joe said something to Whit. The pitcher started for Joe and DiMag signified a willingness to save him some steps and meet him half-way. Other players intervened and both clubs calmed down after that. When the game, and the Series, was over, Wyatt was one of the few Dodgers who came personally to the Yankee clubhouse to congratulate the winners, and he and Joe shook hands.

DiMaggio's reputation has been growing steadily, as has his popularity with the fans. A couple of years ago Ted Williams had a bulge on DiMag, but the pendulum now seems to have swung the other way.

John C. Hoffman of the *Chicago Times* took some friends on a tour of the Yankee clubhouse when the White Sox were playing in New York. Although the game had been finished for more than an hour and ballplayers, next to firemen, are the most notoriously rapid dressers in the world, DiMag was still seated in the Yankee clubhouse reading a newspaper.

Hoffman couldn't believe it, unless Joe was a victim of the housing shortage and lived in the Stadium. It was explained to the visiting writer that the Clipper didn't dare leave the ball park until the mob outside had disappeared or at least dwindled. Joe once went through the mob and came out with an expensive sports coat in rags and his shirt in tatters.

DiMag doesn't fool all the fans by lingering in the clubhouse for an hour or an hour and a half after the game. He does, however, outlast many of them, which makes the running of the gauntlet to his car less hazardous. Once a 12-year-old kid clung to the fender as the car was started and Joe had to stop for fear the boy might be killed.

At one time Joe and Jimmy Ceres sought to circumvent the fans by driving the car into the park but the attendants squawked because they wanted to lock the gates and go home.

DiMaggio is enough of a realist to know this hero worship is the price he pays for stardom. When he's washed up as a ballplayer, there'll be no milling crowds seeking his autograph, or attempting to rip a shred from his garments to paste in their memory books. He accepts the conditions, but can't help wishing that he could take a quiet stroll without having somebody call for the police reserves.

Joe so far hasn't attempted to cash in on his popularity around New York. His restaurant venture in San Francisco was a success, even though the Clipper wasn't on the premises a great deal. There were persistent reports a while back that DiMaggio planned opening a New York restaurant in partnership with Toots Shor. Joe undoubtedly would like to set up another source of income to supplement his baseball, and

to do so while his star is still on the rise, but I have a hunch that when Joe sold his interests in his San Francisco restaurant, he was bidding farewell to the catering business for all time.

Another hunch which persists with me is that Joe doesn't wish to grow old in baseball. He has never said so but from my association with him, I don't think DiMag ever wishes to reach the point where a manager will be forced to bench him for a younger player.

Only those who are close to Joe know the intense pride he takes in his work. Until the 1946 season, DiMag never knew what it was to have a bad year in baseball. In his three years with the Seals, Joe hit all the way from .340 to .398 and he had never hit under .300 with the Yanks, his average for his first seven years being .339. Thus the Clipper's .290 batting average and his 25 home runs for 1946 were pretty small potatoes for him.

It was apparent to Yankee fans, and to Bucky Harris, as early as August of 1948 that if the Bombers were to repeat their success of the previous year, it would have to be a one-man job. And the one man, of course, was DiMaggio. At that, the Yanks almost made the ride to glory on the coat-tails of the Clipper. It is doubtful if Joe ever had a greater inspirational effect upon his fellow players than he did in '48.

DiMaggio, then approaching his 34th birthday, ran the bases as he never had before. He led the league in home runs and he was first in the important runs-batted-in category.

Two of DiMaggio's greatest thrills in that season came in Fenway Park, under the eye of his old boss, Joe McCarthy, who had returned to the baseball wars to pilot the Red Sox. One was on September 10, when it seemed the Yanks were about to slide out of the pennant race. They had been belted to a fare-thee-well in two previous games in Boston by the Sox.

That game, the third of the series, came just before the Yanks were scheduled to head into the West for their final swing through the badlands. With the score tied in the 10th and the bases filled, DiMaggio came up and belted one into the center-field bleachers, a 400-foot drive which was still climbing when it disappeared from view.

It was a shot in the arm to the Yankees, such a shot that it kept them in the running until the day before the season ended. In the finale, DiMaggio, playing on his one good foot, made four hits in Boston in a losing cause as the Sox went on to win and tie Cleveland for the pennant.

After the limping DiMaggio got his fourth straight hit, Manager Harris, with a fine sense of the dramatic, lifted Joe for a pinch-hitter. As he hobbled to the dugout, DiMag received an ovation from the Fenway Park throng which rarely has fallen to the lot of a rival ballplayer in any city.

It was in 1948, too, that the Yankee Stadium fans took Joe unto their bosoms as they never had before. They had always admired and respected him for the great player he is, but DiMag's efforts to keep the faltering team in one piece were so evident as to be apparent to even the most casual of fans. In none of the pennant-winning years was DiMaggio as popular in the Bronx as he was in 1948.

The Clipper likes to recall a conversation he had with his buddy Lefty Gomez in one of his early years with the Yankees. "Guys are always coming up to me and asking me where I get my power," remarked Joe somewhat querulously.

"Listen, Joe," advised Lefty, "that's no cause for complaint. The time to get worried is when guys come up to you and ask you where your power *went!*"

DiMaggio's shyness in public is not an act. He was on the CBS sports program with Red Barber one evening and was literally shaking with relief when it was over. "I always get nervous looking at a microphone," explained Joe.

It is inevitable in any discussion of a star ballplayer that his managerial talents be assayed. Almost everybody who ever played ball has had a yen to become a manager and I don't suppose Joe is any exception, although he always shunts such talk aside by saying it is too early to think about that now. Ballplayers think the Clipper would make a good manager. His judgment is instinctively good, just as Babe Ruth's was, and the respect in which he is held by teammates, opposing players, and umpires, indicates Joe would be able to deal with his personnel. As the Clipper says, it may be too early to talk of his prospects of ever managing in the majors, but the possibilities are intriguing.

"Joe DiMaggio is one of the finest fellows that ever came into baseball," Joe Cronin has commented. "He's the natural leader you're always looking for and seldom finding. He's got that perfect temperament, a competitor who drags others along with him, a man who stands up in defeat and shakes it off. And more than that, he inspires in all the others around him a respect for victory; he shows them the pleasure and enjoyment of winning."

This isn't a trial balloon for Joe's managerial ambitions, because he hasn't any. As any American League pitcher will tell you, a guy who can hit like Jolting Joe needn't worry about who does the managing, either of his own team or of the opposition. There is no strategic maneuver to compare with a line drive hit between the outfielders.

As Jim Farley remarked, the rise of the DiMaggio clan in baseball is truly an American saga. The DiMaggios can thank baseball for what it has brought them and baseball can thank the DiMaggios for what they have brought to the game.

Hey, DiMag!

The Truth About CONNIE MACK

By Ed Fitzgerald

WHEN Cornelius McGillicuddy kicked and squalled his way into this life on December 23, 1862, in East Brookfield, Massachusetts, the men of the town were busy making shoes for the Union armies locked in a death struggle with the Confederate States of America.

Which pretty well indicates that the tall, courtly gentleman with the high, starched collar who runs the Philadelphia Athletics in the twin capacities of president and manager is no pink-cheeked upstart. But if you need further proof of his age, consider the fact that Connie was already 42 years old when his Athletics met the New York Giants in the first official World Series in 1905.

In 1905, the President of the United States got a telegram from Nicholas, Czar of all the Russias, thanking him for his help in bringing about the end of the Russo-Japanese War. That was President Roosevelt—Theodore, not Franklin D.

In 1905, John Drew, Maxine Elliott, and Lew Fields were the big stars on Broadway, where the hit show was a tearjerker called "Way Down East." Derby hats were selling for two dollars, and you could rent a four-room apartment in the best part of any town in America for \$19 a month. John Philip Sousa and his brass band were playing at the New York Hippodrome, and the Pope-Waverly Electric Automobile people were trying to convince everybody that the gasoline buggy was uneconomical and unsafe and probably wouldn't last.

You could get four percent interest on your money at the toughest bank in America, and lots of places were offering five and six. A new Cadillac runabout cost \$750, and a lady could buy a Fall outfit for \$4.80. Made-to-order men's suits, for the discriminating gentleman, cost a whopping \$10. But you get the idea. It wasn't yesterday, nor even the day before.

In other words, the elongated patriarch of the Athletics has been doing business at the same old stand for a long time. But most American base-

ball fans know that. What they don't know is what kind of man he really is. More specifically, they're puzzled by the seeming inconsistencies in Mack's makeup. They know he won a flock of pennants in his time, and a neat bundle of world championships, too. But they can't figure out why he has been satisfied to operate in the murky depths of last place so often, and why he deliberately tore apart his greatest teams.

In short, what they most want to know is this: is Connie Mack the noble sportsman of baseball legend, or is he a cold-blooded businessman interested only in his private collection of U. S. currency?

The answer can't be thrown out swiftly. You've got to dig into the fabulous career of the man, into the workings of his mind and the realities of his past performances. You've got to balance one thing against another, study his motives and his results, then add it all up to your own satisfaction.

Obviously, the place to begin such a chore is in Philadelphia, for Philadelphia is more than the home of Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, and scrapple. It's also Connie Mack's town.

The Pennsylvania Railroad has a station in North Philadelphia, and when you walk outside to the street you're only five minutes by taxi from Shibe Park, the home of the A's and the personal domain of Connie Mack. You get a cab by waiting in line on the sidewalk outside the station, and if you're interested in baseball you probably talk about it to the guy behind the wheel.

"You go to see the A's much?" I asked my jockey.

He laughed. "Once in a while," he said. "Can't afford it too often, for one thing. But even if I could, I don't think I'd go much. Hell, you get tired watching those guys take it in the neck." The cab skidded skillfully around a corner, and I could see the floodlights of the ball park sticking up above the wall of the stadium like the filaments of a spider web.

"But the A's finished fourth last year, didn't they?"

The cabbie spit out an impolite word. "So what?" he demanded, cynically. "They'll be back in the cellar next year. What the hell have they got to build on? Most of them ain't gettin' any younger. Eddie Joost was the big difference at short, the guy who made the club, and I don't have to tell you Joost ain't no recruit. How much longer is Sam Chapman gonna last? Sure, they got that McCahan kid to pitch and he looks good, and the kid on first, that Fain, he's okay, too. But it don't look like an improving ball club to me, and I don't see the old boy spreadin' any of his cabbage around to get the big hitters he needs if he's gonna win. I think he figures he's makin' money now, so why worry?"

With a flourish, he swept up to the side door of Shibe Park, the door with the sign "Employees" over it, pushed down the flag on the meter, and held out his hand. "You owe me 85 cents," he announced. Gesturing toward the door, he grinned. "If you see the old boy," he told me,

"give him my regards and tell him I said he oughta take the rubber band off his bankroll."

You can spend weeks digging into the spectacular career of this man Mack. You can talk to dozens of people about him, and read all kinds of reference material on him, but when you get all through you still find yourself stuck with that one question. What the fan wants to know is, why doesn't he break down and spend a little money on his ball club if he seriously wants another pennant winner? They think it's wonderful that he could assemble a fine pitching staff without straining the club treasury, but if he really wants to win, doesn't he know he's going to have to buy hitters?

That's what I was thinking as I crossed the sidewalk and greeted the man at the open door. He wore an old Philadelphia warmup jacket, no hat, and a tired expression. "Who you looking for?" he asked.

"I've got an appointment with Connie Mack," I told him.

He motioned toward a concrete ramp. "Go up to the grandstand and walk up the stairs half a flight. Mister Mack's office is between the grandstand and the upper stand."

When I reached the grandstand level, I had to stop and look. No matter how many times you go into a big ball park, it's always a pleasant shock to walk out of the barren concrete runways and ramps into the daylight and see the expanse of green grass in front of you. And an empty stadium can be just as exciting as a full one.

You stand there in the deserted arena, and you ignore the reality of what you see. You fill in the empty seats automatically, and you remember how that sullen genius, Lefty Grove, used to send his shrieking speedball into home plate from that vacant pitcher's mound. Your mind revives the image of brawny Jimmy Foxx waving his menacing bat at enemy pitchers. You remember the way the Philadelphia fans groaned as they saw the promising rookie, Al Simmons, swing gracelessly with his foot in the bucket, and you remember how they lifted off the roof with their cheers as year in and year out that marvelous slugger slammed the ball into the left-field stands. You don't know, because you weren't around then, but you find yourself wondering how the customers of another generation felt as they sat in these seats and watched the defensive magic of the \$100,000 infield, with Stuffie McInnis, Eddie Collins, Jack Barry, and Home Run Baker pulling off their daily miracles on the dirt and the short grass.

Even when you walk down the narrow catwalk that leads to Connie Mack's office, you can't shake off the ghosts you see before your eyes. How many heroes of yesterday's box-scores walked here? How many of them knocked on this door you're knocking on now?

But you can't let yourself dwell on the past too much. On a mission like this, the past can be your biggest trap. It's the present you're inter-

ested in. You want to find out what kind of future Connie Mack has been planning for himself and the people who pay their hard-earned money to see his Athletics play baseball.

You get all your thoughts pretty well collected, with the wraiths of other days firmly shoved into the back of your mind. Then the door opens and six-foot, four-inch Connie Mack stands there with his clear blue eyes fastened on you. You've worked yourself up to a tough-minded, businesslike pitch. You're ready with a stream of hot questions, and you want logical answers. So what do you say?

I'll tell you exactly what you say. You stare at this spare, angular man, at his magnificent features which look as though they're etched in old parchment, and you say: "How do you do, Mister Mack?"

Not, "How are you, Connie?" Or, "Well, so you're Connie Mack!" Nor even a breezy "I've always wanted to meet Connie Mack!" You say none of these. When you look at this giant of baseball folklore, you say, "Mister Mack," and you mean it, because the dignity of the man commands your instant respect.

But if you're afraid you're in for a chilly, formal interview, you change your mind in a hurry. Connie Mack has been a public idol in this country for over half a century, but he's the son of an Irishman named Mike McGillicuddy and there's a twinkle in his eye and a warmth in his manner that's Celtic through and through. You know he's a big shot because you know what he's accomplished since he left East Brookfield. But you don't find it out from Connie Mack.

He shook hands, closed the door, and walked behind his desk to the big leather chair that's his workshop. He sat up straight, his 86 years carried lightly on his frail shoulders, and there was an unmistakable alertness in his manner that immediately answered one of my principal questions. There is nothing senile about Connie Mack. In the language of the bleacher fan, he's right on the ball.

Connie wore a plain dark business suit of modern cut, a quiet necktie, and a gleaming white shirt. His collar, of course, was the tall, stiff, white anachronism that is part of the Mack legend. You wonder as you look at him if it doesn't cut into his slender neck. Anyway, you know you'd hate to be wearing it.

He weighed only 150 pounds when he was an active catcher, and he must weigh a lot less now. His body is thin, and his face is thinner. He's got plenty of hair, even though it's as gray as it could get. And he has long, delicate fingers, amazingly straight for the fingers of an old-time catcher. He looks like a man whose native dignity would make any painter worth his salt itch to get at his easel and brush.

There was nothing close-mouthed or formal about the sage of Philadelphia when he began to speak. His speech wasn't the language of the dugout, either. He talked easily and intelligently, spicing his remarks

with the wry humor for which he is famous. I explained to him that I was more interested in his personal habits and opinions than I was in the chronological story of his baseball career, and he nodded understandingly.

"You ask the questions," he said, "and we'll see if we can go along with them." He must have felt he could go along with them, because he didn't refuse to answer a single one.

Asking the questions isn't too easy. You feel kind of funny sitting there across from a distinguished citizen almost three times as old as you are, flinging pointed inquiries at him. You almost expect him to tell you it's none of your business and why don't you go jump in the lake. But Connie Mack doesn't operate that way.

I didn't want to come right out with it, but I kept trying to get the old gentleman to tell me his side of the "pennant-wrecking" story. That is, the story that Connie deliberately junked his two finest championship teams in order to fill his treasury, ignoring the fact that he was robbing his faithful fans of their money's worth.

You can imagine how much my respect for him rose when he faced the issue squarely. Connie has a wonderful sense of humor, and he has a gentle, patient outlook on life that keeps him from resenting the most barbed questions.

"I didn't sell those players for profit," he said. "I sold them because in both cases (meaning the 1914 and 1930 teams) I foresaw the crackup of the clubs. I knew it was time to rebuild."

That's his story, and he sticks to it. Is it the whole truth? Well, that's hard to say. The best way to decide is to plunge right into the man's history, dig into his personality, weigh the plus factors against the minus quantities, and arrive at an honest conclusion. You've got to have all the facts before you can hand down a just verdict.

Everybody's curious about how the old man stands the pace of his busy life. The way he tells it, he stands it by taking good care of himself, and by keeping up a profound interest in his work.

During the baseball season, Connie gets up at eight o'clock every morning. Before sitting down to his breakfast, he takes half an hour to bathe, shave, and dress. He generally leaves for the office at about nine o'clock. Connie doesn't have a car or a chauffeur of his own, but the man who runs the concessions at Shibe Park stops by for him.

He carries his lunch with him, so he doesn't have to make the trip back home until the ball game is over. Before the game, he corks off for a siesta in the office. If the A's are playing a night game, he leaves the park early in the afternoon and goes home for a long snooze before game-time. Connie doesn't kid himself into thinking he's discovered a 20th Century Fountain of Youth. He knows he needs lots of rest in order to keep going, so he takes it without making any fuss.

Despite the fact that night games represent the greatest single drain on his strength, because of the irregular hours and the chilly weather, it's hardly a secret to baseball fans that Mack is a strong supporter of night baseball. For obvious reasons.

"We don't draw too well in the daytime," he says, "except when the New York and Boston clubs come here. And even Boston doesn't always draw especially well. The Yankees, of course, always pull a crowd. But we draw very well at night, no matter which club we're playing."

Connie frankly admits he takes things a lot easier these days. "As the years roll around, I don't watch practice as much as I once did," he says. "Naturally, I'm not able to do as much as I did before, and I find there is plenty of work for me right here in the office. I'm satisfied that I have good coaches in my son, Earle, Al Simmons, Earle Brucker, and Jimmy Dykes."

Connie used to handle the pitchers himself, but now that he's got Brucker, he has let that task pass out of his hands. It's easy to see that this 86-year-old wonder doesn't waste any time feeling sorry for himself. Sure, he'd like to be out there on the field belting fungo flies to the outfielders. He'd like to be working with all the young pitchers and drilling the ambitious hitters. But he can't do everything, so he satisfies himself with the myriad duties of the club presidency, and becomes an active manager only at game-time.

Next to Branch Rickey of the Brooklyn Dodgers, the Philadelphia stringbean is probably the most famous teetotaler in baseball. Connie doesn't touch anything alcoholic. "I never liked it much," he'll tell you, seriously.

"I have a lot of will power," he told me. "I feel I have, at least, because I've done things that would warrant my saying that. When I say I will or won't do something, I generally do it."

Mack has a small circle of friends in Philadelphia, whom he goes to see in his spare time, but the circle is getting smaller every year. "There used to be about 20 couples who got around to see each other a lot," he said. "But either the man or the wife has passed away in most instances, and now I guess it's down to two or three couples. So Mrs. Mack and I don't go out too much."

You couldn't miss the loneliness in his voice as he talked about the friends who had gone. It must be a sad thing to see old acquaintances pass out of your life in a steady stream, and to realize that the world you knew isn't the same any more. But you get a clue to the peace Connie has made with the world when you see the way his steady eyes sparkle again as he changes the subject to a baseball topic. Connie Mack loves baseball best of all.

Connie fathered eight children, five girls and three boys, in two marriages. His first wife was Margaret Hogan, who died in 1892. Two boys,

Earle and Roy, and a daughter, Margaret, were her children. He married his present wife, the former Katherine Halloran, on October 27, 1910, and they have had five children. His oldest daughter, Margaret, died several years ago, but all the other children are living.

Is his wife a baseball fan? Not especially, says Connie. "It takes too much out of her. She likes the night games, though, and generally comes to all of them."

Connie and his wife sold their big house in the Mt. Airy section of Philadelphia a few years ago, and now they live in a spacious apartment in the same district of the sprawling city. Their apartment house is in a nice neighborhood, but nothing pretentious.

Connie is not the sole owner of the Athletics. The heirs of Ben F. Shibe, the major stockholder in the original club, are his partners. However, Connie did buy enough stock to gain majority control back in 1940, when he was 77. The club is very much a family affair—including both the Macks and Shibes as one big family. Few jobs of any consequence are held by outsiders.

"Mr. Shibe believed in being equal partners," Connie told me. "And though my sons and I bought a controlling interest, we don't take advantage of it."

I asked him if he attended all the Athletics' games, and he looked a little surprised, as though that was a silly question. He picked up a ruler from the glistening mahogany top of his desk, a desk that reflected the neatness of its owner, and talked quietly.

"Yes, I'm at every game," he said, "both at home and away."

Getting up out of his chair, he took me on a Cook's Tour of the office, pointing out the significance of the pictures, souvenirs, and assorted memorabilia. It seemed to give him genuine pleasure to pick up each article, examine it carefully, and tell me who gave it to him, and why. He told me the office used to be a mass of pictures from the ceiling to the floor. "But I came back from a Western trip a few years ago, and they'd cleaned it all up. John Shibe did it. What he did with the pictures, I don't know. I think my son Roy has a lot of them."

How does he feel about the support his team has received from the people of Philadelphia and the surrounding countryside?

Connie spoke with deep conviction on that subject. "Oh, now, I want to tell you," he said in a low voice. "It's just wonderful. When I look back and see the many bad clubs I've given Philadelphia, and how they were supported by these people, it makes me feel humble."

That led him into another street. "You know," he said thoughtfully, "I am considered by a lot of people to be rich. But I haven't got a lot of money. When I pass away, they'll wonder where I buried all the money. But I am very well satisfied. I have had a good living out of the game, and the people of Philadelphia have been very loyal to me."

"I'm very happy here. Wherever I go in the city, I am known, and the people treat me splendidly. Last night I went to the opening of a new bowling establishment, and it was wonderful how much they made of me."

Of course, all is not ice cream and cake for Mack. He has his troubles, just like ordinary men. Like the troubles of ordinary men, some of them are domestic and some are of a business nature.

His major domestic disturbance reached the boiling point in the Summer of 1946. It was an explosion that rocked the entire Mack family.

Connie's wife, then 70 years old, told newspaper reporters on April 22, 1946, that she and her husband had separated. She readily admitted the reason for the separation was Connie's distribution of more than half his stock in the Philadelphia ball club among three of his children—Earle, Roy, and Connie, Jr.

"I learned about the transfer of the stock in October," she said. "I went to St. Petersburg in December and asked him about it. He said it would all be straightened out in two or three years. But he's 83, and life is too uncertain to anticipate what may happen in the next two or three years.

"I returned here (to Philadelphia) the first of January, and later he sent word that he was not returning, and that he was sending for his clothes. He did so, and went to the Mayfair House." (A hotel in suburban Germantown.)

At the time Mrs. Mack gave that interview to the press, she and Connie were living very much apart. When the reporters caught up with Connie, to get his side of the dispute, the old gentleman was in New York with the A's for an early-season series, and he didn't take kindly to the questioning.

"Things will be straightened out in a short time," he insisted. "I have no comment to make. This is a personal matter and I hope people will regard it as private and keep out of it."

Asked if there was any chance of a reconciliation, Mrs. Mack told the news hounds sharply, "Not with me. I don't know how long I'll stand up, but I'm on my own."

Later, Mrs. Mack told reporters, "The point is, there are nine persons to be considered in this—his eight children and me. And it didn't sound very good when he gave more than half the stock to three of them."

When they were spreading the story of the intra-family struggle across their pages, the Philadelphia newspapers recalled that in 1928 Connie created a trust fund for his wife and three oldest children, but revoked it a little more than a year later. The trust comprised 747 shares of club stock, which reverted to Mack upon the revocation of the trust.

During the fuss about his separation from Mrs. Mack, Connie came as close to severing diplomatic relations with the gentlemen of the press

as he ever has. He hung up on people who asked him about the matter over the telephone, and he was visibly annoyed whenever any outsider displayed any curiosity about the matter.

"All I can say," he stated one day, "is that Mrs. McGillicuddy and I have been married for 35 years, and that in that time I have never spoken a harsh word to her. It would be so much better if people would just attend to their own business."

The family fight was settled after the Macks had been separated for about six months. They had a family dinner party on October 22, 1946, to celebrate the healing of the breach. Mrs. Mack was quoted by the papers as being "very happy." Connie said brusquely he "didn't care to discuss the matter at all."

Connie's other recent difficulties are more pressing. The rawboned, softspoken New England Irishman who master-minded the Athletics to nine American League pennants and five world championships today finds himself confronted by an array of implacable critics who threaten to make his old age miserable.

The wolves have been howling for his scalp more loudly, and more persistently, than ever before. The noise was abated somewhat by the surprisingly strong fight the A's waged in 1948, but even Connie knows the quiet spell won't survive the first sign of a collapse on the part of his team.

Like the taxicab driver who complained to me that Mack wouldn't spend money to improve his club, the sportswriters and fans who wish he'd step down base their desire for a change on one contention. That is simply that a new owner might be less concerned with making money and more concerned with building a better team.

"We're trying as hard as we can to build up to a pennant," says Mack. "We don't have the team for it now, I don't think. This club is great on the defense, but light-hitting. If we could have hit better last Summer, there's no telling how far we could have gone."

Connie expects some of the younger pitchers on his staff, notably Joe Coleman, to improve. He thinks Bill McCahan (who flung a 3-0 no-hitter against the Senators in 1947) will bounce back from his indifferent '48 performance with a bang.

The old master is high on southpaw Lou Brissie, the Purple Heart war veteran. "I look for him to be a real great pitcher some day," says Connie, who dearly loves southpaws. And why not? He can't forget what Lefty Grove did for him.

Connie claims he has his own reasons for not buying a lot of Grade A minor-league prospects. "Except in very rare instances," he says, "players of the higher class minor leagues do not appeal to me, because I have my own ideas of how to develop players."

His critics say this is a lot of hogwash. "Good minor-leaguers," they

point out, "cost a bundle of money. That's the only objection Mack has to them."

They call your attention to the fact that Connie was delighted to acquire the brilliant young Ferris Fain in '47, and made no mention of any unhappiness in being forced to take on a player developed by someone else. "That," they'll tell you, "is because Mack was able to draft Fain from the San Francisco club of the Pacific Coast League for only a lousy \$10,000."

Yet Mack doesn't seem to take the anguished cries of his detractors too seriously. No doubt he finds the Shibe Park attendance figures for 1948 comforting. He must say to himself, as he sits behind his desk and taps a pencil thoughtfully against his metallic collar, that his critics must be noisier than they are numerous. Otherwise, he probably wonders, how can you explain the golden harvest of good American dollars at the gate?

Do people who hold you in contempt pay their hard-earned money to see your bad team play, thus lining your pockets with gold and at the same time tacitly encouraging your policies? The answer would seem to be no.

The conclusion drawn by the old man, and by many a canny baseball executive, is that Philadelphia—from Germantown to Chestnut Hill to the factory sections of the town—is still squarely in Connie Mack's corner, rooting for the agile old gentleman to pull a rabbit out of his hat once more.

Still, there's no getting away from the fact that Connie has a man-sized problem on his hands. He can't afford to overlook the fact that a whole generation of baseball fans has grown up in Philadelphia without ever knowing the A's to fly an American League pennant from their flagpole. That's no way to train future customers.

This new generation respects Connie for his heroic position in the history of baseball, respects him for the genius which brought so many championships to Philadelphia. But it is emphatically not willing to get all its baseball thrills out of dusty record books. These young people want to see pennants being won today, not listen to stories of pennants that were won in the long, long ago.

Even the 1948 spurt to the rarefied heights of fourth place has failed to pacify these rebels. They laugh about it, ridicule the team that attained so lofty an honor, and freely predict the Athletics will collapse on schedule in the future unless their uncertain attack is bolstered by some genuine sluggers.

Milton Gross, a baseball writer for the *New York Post*, wrote a story in 1946 in which he claimed that the fans in Philadelphia were finally turning against "The Grand Old Man of Baseball." Reporting that the fans are demanding Mack step aside in favor of "an enlightened, live-

wire, free-spending ownership," Gross wrote sadly that Connie's "halo is showing."

There's not much question, however, that nothing annoys Mack quite as much as the recurrent rumors of his retirement. As sure as the snows of the Winter melt on Market Street in mid-Philadelphia, the coming of the Spring brings with it every year a new hint that the old man is getting ready to pull out. Connie has been known to get highly emotional when denying these annual rumors.

In the very fact that he doesn't want to retire may lie the greatest hope for the future of Philadelphia baseball. Because he wants to stay on the job, Connie may well redouble his efforts to put some vinegar into the A's. It cannot possibly be a source of any satisfaction to this marvelous character to know that a lot of people wish he'd quit the office in Shibe Park Tower where he has hung his hat and stretched his long legs these many, many years. Connie must want desperately to end his amazing career on a note of triumph.

The baseball saga of Connie Mack had its beginnings in his home town of East Brookfield in Massachusetts. Connie had taken a job in one of the local shoe factories when he was 16, and by the time he was 20 he had become a foreman. In his spare time, he played semi-pro ball for the town entry in the Central Massachusetts League, serving as the catcher and "taking my share of whatever was dropped in the hat."

In 1884, when he was 21, Connie was offered \$90 a month to play professionally for the Meriden club of the Connecticut League. He wanted badly to accept the bid, but he worried plenty about throwing up a good job to cast his lot with a sport that was beneath the notice of decent society.

Looking back at it now, Mack says, "Baseball was mighty glamorous and exciting to me but there is no use in blinking at the fact that at that time the game was thought by solid, respectable people to be only one degree above grand larceny, arson, and mayhem."

So Connie thought twice about the Meriden offer—then accepted it. A love of the game was in his blood even then, and he knew he wouldn't be happy if he turned down a chance to make it his profession. The money certainly was satisfactory. In those days, \$90 a month was a whopping sum for a young ballplayer. Connie is fond of saying, "I would have played for half that." And he adds, "I was afraid to let the other boys on the club know what a plutocrat I was."

It's interesting to learn that in these formative days of his youth Connie was no holier-than-thou youngster. Although he is famous for not drinking and not swearing, he was perfectly normal in that he experimented with both. He just didn't like them, that's all, so they have played no part in his life.

Connie was a talkative catcher. Never mean or profane in his comments, he did toss out a running fire of comment designed to upset the batters. He played under the name of Mack, but he disputes the old story that his name was shortened by scorekeepers who couldn't fit McGillicuddy into their books. He says his family always went by the name of Mack, using the full name only on official papers.

Hartford, in the South New England League, was Connie's next port of call. He took a job there in 1885 at a salary of \$125 a month. This was real money, and the people in East Brookfield saw Connie blossom out in good clothes and shiny derby hats. He was coming up in the world.

Connie soon gained a measure of fame as one-half the so-called "Hartford Battery" of Frank Gilmore and Connie Mack. He was doing all right in company with Frank Gilmore, a pitcher who was built along the same scarecrow lines as Mack. In 1886, when Hartford became a member of the old Eastern League, Connie's take was \$200 a month—and in those days that was big money. He hit only .248 in 69 games that season, but he impressed his employers with his all-around hustle and skill.

Walter F. Hewitt, the owner of the Washington club in the National League, became interested in some of the Hartford players during the '86 campaign, particularly the stringbean pitcher, Gilmore. He opened negotiations with the Hartford management to buy the players he wanted, and when he finished dickering he owned five of the Hartford stars. The whole transaction cost Hewitt a mere \$3,500.

For years, the story has been passed around that Washington wanted Frank Gilmore, but didn't want Mack, and that Gilmore refused to report to the major-league club unless Connie was included in the deal.

"That's absolutely wrong," Connie told me. "It was the catcher they wanted. I've seen it so many times I wish you would correct it. If Frank Gilmore were alive, he'd tell you he wouldn't even have been an ordinary pitcher without me."

With a pardonable touch of pride, Mack added, "When I signed with the Washington club I was probably getting more money than any of the men on the Chicago club, which had the reputation of possessing more star players than any other team in baseball at the time."

Remembering with a guilty conscience the sum he squeezed out of that old-time ball club's treasury, Connie said: "The Washington manager came to my home in East Brookfield once, and asked me to voluntarily reduce my salary. I refused. I knew my salary was a terrific drain on them, but I was no different from any other ballplayer. I wanted all I could get." He was already planning his marriage to Margaret Hogan and probably figured he needed it.

Connie finished up the 1886 season with Washington, and hit a

lusty .361 in 10 big-league games. Tall and courteous, he was an expert bat-tipper when his pitcher was in the hole. He'd reach out with his gloved hand just as the batter began his swing, and deflect the bat. It was slightly illegal, of course, but highly effective.

Telling about his adventures in bat-tipping, Connie leaned back in his big chair and laughed. "The only player who ever got back at me for helping him hit the ball was Buck Weaver," he reminisced. "One day Buck got mad at me and smacked me right across the wrists with his bat."

In those days, the batter was allowed to tell the pitcher what kind of ball he wanted thrown to him, and Connie freely admits that was a big help to him. Mack liked high ones, and he always managed to do all right belting those fat pitches. After the rules were changed to allow the pitcher to throw the ball anywhere he chose in the strike zone, between the shoulders and the knees, things weren't so good for a lot of the boys. "I couldn't hit for sour apples then," Connie confessed with a grin.

Naturally, the pitchers knew all the balls the old-timers *couldn't* hit, because for years the batters had been inadvertently revealing their weaknesses by calling for the kind of balls they *could* hit.

Recalling what little regard other folks had for ballplayers in that period, Connie said, "We couldn't get into a first-class hotel. In fact, they wouldn't take us in a second-class hotel. But they would take us in a third-class hotel, if we promised not to mingle with the other guests."

Baseball was a tough game in those days and it was tougher on the catcher than anyone else, with the possible exception of the umpire. Stopping those stinging pitches with no protection but a regular finger glove (with the fingers cut short) on his left hand, the catcher generally wound up with a paw that looked like an uncooked steak.

Recalling his own troubles in that department, Connie says, "My own fingers would not have exactly qualified for a beauty show. My fingers seemed to go off in odd directions from one another on private errands of their own."

In 1890, most of the top National League players seceded from the circuit to play in the new Players League formed by the Baseball Brotherhood, the first baseball union. Connie, the arch-conservative of today, was one of the rebels who skipped their old jobs. He went, along with most of the other Washington players, to the Buffalo club of the new league. He also invested his life savings in the new team. When the organization collapsed at the close of its first season of play, Connie was as broke as when he left the shoe factory in East Brookfield.

His next job was with the Pittsburgh club of the National League. He stayed with Pittsburgh for six seasons, although his value as a player

was lessened considerably by an 1893 accident in which his leg was torn open and his ankle fractured by the spikes of a Boston player named Herman Long. In 1894, Colonel W. W. Kerr appointed Mack manager of the team, replacing Al Buckenberger with a few weeks of the season to go. Connie was a widower with three children now. Mrs. Mack had died in 1892.

Mack had little success managing the Smoky City club, and Colonel Kerr dropped the guillotine on his slim shoulders in September, 1896. Although Connie had no reason to rejoice at the time, it turned out to be a great break for him. Ban Johnson, the president of the Western League, asked him to take over the job of managing the Milwaukee team in that circuit, offering him an interest in the club as an added inducement. Mack accepted, and has never had any reason to regret it. For that job led directly to his brilliant American League career.

Although Mack didn't know it when he first went to Milwaukee, Ban Johnson had big ideas for his league. He was eager to challenge the supremacy of the established National League, and set up his own circuit—somewhat expanded—as a second major league. The first big step in this direction was taken at a meeting held in Chicago on October 14, 1900.

As a result of the plans made at that conference, Connie was assigned to take over as manager of a new club in Philadelphia. The name of the league was changed to the American League, and new clubs were planned for Baltimore, Washington, and Boston, as well as Philadelphia.

Johnson suggested that Connie go to Philly and get in touch with Ben F. Shibe, one of the partners in A. J. Reach and Company, manufacturers of baseballs and other sporting goods. Ban thought Shibe might invest some money in the team Connie was scheduled to head. Connie himself was given 25 per cent of the stock in the club, while the other 75 per cent was held by Charlie Somers, who was the financial "angel" of the deal. As soon as Shibe came in, he took over two-thirds of the Somers stock, thus acquiring a 50 per cent interest in the club. Two newspapermen obtained the remaining 25 per cent.

The Philadelphia club called itself the Athletics, an ancient and honorable name in Philadelphia baseball. There had been teams called the Athletics in the Quaker City through the years, and the name was familiar to the people there.

John McGraw, the belligerent manager of the Baltimore Orioles in the brand new league, didn't think much of the Philadelphia franchise and remarked loudly that the Athletics would be the white elephants of the league. That stirred Connie's sense of humor, and he promptly made the official insignia of the club a white elephant. That's what it is, to this day.

The first American League ball park in Philadelphia was constructed

hastily at the corner of Twenty-ninth Street and Columbia Avenue, on rented ground. Named Columbia Park, it boasted wooden seats for approximately 9,500 customers. It was an adequate setup, even if the breeze did carry an intoxicating smell of freshly-brewed beer as it blew through the stands and over the diamond. The park was right in the middle of Philadelphia's Brewerytown.

Like all the other managers in the new league, Connie raided National League talent unscrupulously. He has since said he didn't feel bad about it because, as an old National League player himself, he resented the \$2,400 salary ceiling in effect in that circuit. He thought the baseball war would give the players a financial break.

Connie's biggest catch was the immortal second-baseman, Napoleon Lajoie, whom he got away from the Phillies, along with two pitchers, Chick Fraser and Bill Bernard. He also enticed Lave Cross, who became the first captain of the Athletics, out of the St. Louis Cardinals' fold. From the ranks of the old Ban Johnson league, he obtained such players as Mike Powers and Socks Seybold. From Gettysburg College, he got a young pitcher named Eddie Plank. All in all, he had a pretty fair club when the season got underway.

Using, at one time or another, a grand total of 55 players, Connie finished fourth in that season of 1901. He wasn't satisfied but he didn't feel too bad. His team had performed well, and the individual brilliance of Lajoie, Cross, and Plank had done much to endear the team to the Philly fans. Things looked so good that Connie took up permanent residence in the city.

And there he has been ever since, never taking his hand off the throttle of the club that in half a century has become one of the great organizations of American sport. They've been tumultuous years, some of them wildly successful and some of them dismal failures for the tall, skinny manager. Through them all, nobody has even hinted that Connie Mack is anything but the finest and most upright of men. Sure, there have been plenty of people ready to complain that he does a sloppy job of running his ball club. But when you pin down his most bitter critic, and ask him what he thinks of the man himself, you get the same answer every time: "He's a great old guy."

As far as his record is concerned, an impartial judge would have trouble hanging the rap of incompetence on this baseball veteran. He won his first American League pennant in 1902, the second year of the new circuit's life, and he added league flags to his string in 1905, 1910, 1911, 1913, 1914, 1929, 1930, and 1931. In five of those pennant-winning years his boys walked off with the championship of the world. Is that the record of a man bankrupt of managerial skill?

For that matter, the managers Mack licked in the World Series duels he has fought were no stumblebums. He beat Frank Chance in 1910,

John McGraw in 1911 and 1913, Joe McCarthy in 1929, and Gabby Street in 1930. You'd be hard pressed to find any lame-brains in that group.

Although he is himself the mildest of men, Connie has never had any trouble handling the various types of athletes who have wandered in and out of his Philadelphia clubhouse. He even managed to exercise a certain amount of control over such immortal screwballs as Rube Waddell and Ossie Schreck, his brilliant battery of the early 1900's—and that was a test before which the stoutest disciplinarian might well have quivered.

Connie remembers a year when the A's were living in a quiet Southern hotel during the Spring training trip, and the boys were doing a lot of grumbling about the food. They were especially critical of the steaks served up by the management. It was the contention of the ballplayers that they got all the second-grade cuts of meat, the better steaks being saved for the other clients. They protested bitterly, and it is a well-known fact that a ballplayer can get much more excited about his chow than he can about a bad decision at second base.

Finally, they began sending back the unsatisfactory portions, but they soon became convinced the proprietor was merely returning the same steaks, rotating them among different players. Refusing to admit defeat, the resourceful athletes devised the scheme of making knife marks on the steaks they sent back, so they could recognize them if they were returned.

One day Ossie Schreck, the colorful catcher, got back a steak bearing an unmistakable knife mark. Ossie blew up. Shouting imprecations at the hotel owner, he rushed out of the dining room and got his hands on a hammer and some nails.

Grabbing the offending chunk of meat, Ossie nailed it firmly to the wall of the dining room, shouting meanwhile: "They served this god-dam steak twice, but they ain't gonna serve it no three times!"

Lefty Grove was another peculiar character who was handled smartly by the Philadelphia pilot. Grove was an egotistical pitcher who rarely got along with anybody. Mack handled him by letting him do pretty much as he pleased, applying the screws only when it meant something. Lefty was his own coach and his own trainer, but he grew to recognize the fact that Connie Mack was the boss. He liked Connie's methods, and he worked his head off for him.

Old Man Mose was the only ballplayer who had the run—and took it—of Mack's private office. Lefty walked in and out of the sanctum as often as he pleased. He was fond of stealing up behind Mack's chair and slapping the old boy on the back—easing up a little on his swing so he wouldn't kill him. And he was the only ballplayer who had the nerve to call the boss Connie.

There was, of course, plenty of reason for Mack to put up with Grove's eccentric behavior. From 1927 to 1933, his last year with A's, Lefty never won less than 20 games. In 1930 he won 28, and in 1931 he won 31, losing only four. He's the last 30-game winner the American League has seen to this day.

Part of Mack's managerial technique is his refusal to bawl out a player in front of his mates. He always waits until he can get the offending youth aside, and speak to him privately. It works, too. Oh, there have been times when it didn't work. But Connie never changes his system. Like Joe McCarthy, he simply gets rid of the difficult players.

"The moment I make up my mind that forbearance and toleration will not work with a player," he says, seriously, "I'm through with him once and for all."

Even Mr. Mack can make mistakes, of course. In 1948, he fired Nelson Potter because he claimed Potter wasn't trying. The ex-Brownie promptly signed on with the Boston Braves and helped pitch them to the National League pennant.

Connie has been more than a smart field manager for the A's. He also proved himself to be no handicap to the club as a businessman. It was at his suggestion that the club erected Shibe Park in 1909, thus acquiring a modern plant with a capacity (at that time) of 25,000 people. In a day when most ball parks held at best 10,000 customers, the Athletics had stolen a march on everybody. The club benefited handsomely as the crowds poured in to watch Connie's string of championship teams in the years 1910-1914.

With things going so well, widower Mack made his second marriage in 1910. On October 27 of that year he married Katherine Halloran, who became the mother of five young Macks—Mary, Connie, Jr., Ruth, Rita, and Elizabeth.

There may be some dispute about Connie's tricks in the money-spending department, but nobody ever has denied the tall, thin Irishman's right to be called a sportsman. Mister Mack is a sportsman in the truest sense. Only under the most extreme provocation will he trade harsh words with an opponent, and never will he deliberately take advantage of a rival's distress.

A good example of Connie's strict interpretation of good sportsmanship occurred in one of his World Series duels with John McGraw and the New York Giants. A Giant player came home from third base on an infield grounder. He got in well ahead of the throw, but he didn't touch home plate—and everybody in the park noticed his oversight.

On such a play, of course, the umpire cannot take any action until a member of the other team protests the baserunner's failure to touch the base. Only then can the man in blue rule on the play. Everyone waited for Connie to register the formal protest, but Mack sat ramrod-straight

on the bench and didn't move a muscle. The head umpire stared curiously at him, as though inviting the protest everyone expected. Connie said nothing, and the game went on.

Later, a gang of excited reporters tore into the Philadelphia clubhouse and besieged Connie. They exploded questions in a steady barrage, each one trying to outdo the other.

"Didn't you see it, Connie?"

"Why didn't you kick, Connie? The ump was all set to call it!"

The old gentleman raised his hand and quieted the boys. For a few seconds he didn't say anything. Then he answered them in one short sentence that gave those hard-bitten newsmen the greatest sportsmanship lesson of their lives.

There was nothing of the showboat in Connie's manner. What he had to say, he said simply. Looking the mob over, he asked, quietly: "He beat the throw, didn't he?"

That's Connie Mack for you. Can you picture Leo Durocher letting a ballplayer get away with missing home plate just because he thought the guy had the throw licked, and deserved to score? But Connie Mack did it—and he'd do it again, too. Nobody likes to win more than the old gentleman from Philadelphia does. But he's from the old school. He's particular *how* he wins.

Some experts think Connie is too conservative to be a successful manager. But would a die-hard conservative have gambled with Howard Ehmke to open the 1929 World Series against the Chicago Cubs? Ehmke, don't forget, had won just seven games all season, worked only 55 innings, been knocked from the box in his last start, and hadn't pitched in weeks. But he set a new Series record for strikeouts as he fanned 13 men in winning a memorable ball game. Mack gambled that time—and won going away.

There's one thing Connie is conservative about, though. He doesn't like the idea of bundling his ballplayers aboard airplanes. "I don't think the ball clubs should ever fly," he says. "Flying is too darn dangerous." It's not often, though, that you catch the old man saying anything that makes him appear old-fashioned. And who's to say he's wrong in wanting to keep his ballplayers on the ground? Connie reads the papers, too.

The 1914 campaign was one of the toughest of Mack's career despite the fact that he had a great crew of ballplayers working for him. That was the year of the Federal League invasion. The new "outlaw" circuit, backed by Harry F. Sinclair's oil money, Phil Ball's ice fortune, and the bankroll of the Ward Baking Company, started to lasso major-league stars in much the same way Jorge Pasquel tried to get talent more than 25 years later.

Mack's potent crew won 40 of its first 50 games, and everybody in the business conceded the pennant to the A's. But then the Federal League

agents moved in, and began to wave their swollen wallets. The stars of the great Philadelphia ball club—Collins, McInnis, Baker, and the rest—were prime targets of the ivory-hunters. Danny Murphy, who had played on five of Mack's championship clubs, was scouting for the Brooklyn entry in the new league, and he was in a position to offer some of Connie's top players two and three times what the A's were paying them.

"We had to write a lot of new contracts in the middle of the season," Mack recalls. "But the Federals kept raising their offers, and a good many of our players became more and more dissatisfied. Then the club split into two factions, one advocating a jump to the new league and the other holding out for loyalty to the Athletics. We managed to win the pennant because of that fat early lead we had piled up, but we were riddled by dissension by the time the World Series came around. So we were easy prey for George Stallings' sensational Boston Braves. That was the team that was in last place in July, remember?"

That 1914 club was the first of the two great teams that Mack deliberately dismantled. First to go was Eddie Collins, the peerless second-baseman, who was dispatched to the Chicago White Sox in exchange for a \$50,000 check. Then Mack released his three star pitchers, Chief Bender, Eddie Plank, and Jack Coombs. Bender and Plank went into the Federal League, while Coombs caught on with the Brooklyn Dodgers of the National League. Early in the '15 season, Mack let the Boston Red Sox have star shortstop Jack Barry for the paltry sum of \$8,000.

The A's finished dead last that season, and they didn't stick their noses out of the cellar until they had spent seven consecutive seasons at the bottom of the league. In 1916, Connie sold Home Run Baker to the Yankees for \$37,500. When his club finished last again that season, he unloaded catcher Wally Schang, center-fielder Amos Strunk, and pitcher Joe Bush to the Red Sox for three nondescript players and a highly negotiable \$60,000 check.

And that's the way it went. Whether it all started because Mack was sore at his '14 team for blowing the World Series to the Braves, or whether he was tired of paying out high salaries in a period of international uncertainty, nobody can guess.

As I pointed out earlier, Connie claims he didn't do it for profit, but for the good of the club. It could be. The fact remains that most baseball fans don't see it that way. They don't understand how a manager can expect to improve his team by selling or trading away all his best players. According to the creed of the bleacherite, those are the tactics of a man who wants to lose.

Nobody ever has accused Connie Mack of wanting to lose, but it has been said that he's more interested in stuffing money into his safe deposit

box than he is in winning. Yet Mack has shown a willingness to part with some fat sums for ballplayers he thought would help his club. He paid \$105,000 for Lefty Grove (and later sold him and two other players to Tom Yawkey for \$125,000, after using him for nine seasons), \$50,000 for Mickey Cochrane, \$75,000 for Sammy (Bad News) Hale, and \$75,000 for George Earnshaw, to name a few.

Connie doesn't brag about it, but he also shelled out \$45,000 for an untried second-baseman named Benny McCoy a few years before World War II. As it turned out, Benny wasn't the real McCoy, and Mister Mack was stuck—but good. However, the case proves that Connie has been known to throw sizable bundles of scratch around in an effort to put some life into his team.

It took Connie a long time to get his club out of the depths, but once he got started he moved forward steadily. Last for the seventh time in a row in 1921, he finished seventh in 1922, sixth in '23, fifth in '24, and second in '25. The A's slipped to third in '26, then were second again in '27 and '28, and finally hit the jackpot. Shibe Park again flew pennants after the seasons of 1929, 1930, and 1931.

To get up there, Mack had to spend. The Yankees, under Colonel Jacob Ruppert, were free spenders. Connie had to dip into the till heavily in order to keep the New York club from getting a corner on the talent market. Furthermore, at the time Connie began to swap checks for players, instead of vice versa, he was a full 50 per cent owner of the club. He had bought out the two newspapermen who held 25 per cent of the stock. So he had a heavy interest in every dollar that went out. But he still sped the U. S. Government engravings on their way in his search for a pennant.

When he finally made it, Mack made it with plenty to spare. His 1929 Athletics, powered by the slugging of Jimmy Foxx and Al Simmons, raced in a full 18 games ahead of the second place Yankees. It was a great moment for the stern-faced manager. He had been under a heavy barrage for seven long years, and he had vindicated himself.

It was a classy ball club that Connie fielded that year. Mickey Cochrane, the famous Black Mike, was behind the plate, and a better catcher never lived, though there may have been one or two as good. There were stars like Bing Miller, Max Bishop, Jimmy Dykes, and Joe Boley, to team with those sweethearts of swing, Foxx and Simmons. The pitching corps included Lefty Grove, George Earnshaw, Rube Walberg, and Ed Rommel. Quite an outfit by any standards.

After he won the '29 pennant and salted away a World Series victory over Joe McCarthy's Chicago Cubs, Mack went to Florida for a rest. In February, 1930, he was summoned back to Philadelphia to receive the Bok Prize as the man who rendered the greatest service to the city in 1929. It was a great honor for old Connie.

That was the first time the celebrated award ever had been made to anyone but an eminent intellectual or statesman. The Grand Old Man of Baseball, as they already were calling him then, was given a gold medal, a citation, and a check for \$10,000.

Despite the fact that muscular James Emory Foxx larruped 58 homers and drove in 169 runs in 1932 the A's couldn't make it four in a row. They had virtually the same team, but something had gone out of the well-oiled machine. The Yankees won in a walk, and the A's were a bad second.

The national depression was at its height and so was Connie Mack's payroll. The combination was too much for the old gentleman. Once again, as he did in 1915, Mack began to unload. The Chicago White Sox contributed a whopping \$150,000 for Al Simmons, Jimmy Dykes, and Mule Haas, and that was the end of another great era in Philadelphia baseball.

After the Athletics finished third in 1933, Connie's ax fell again. He peddled Mickey Cochrane to the Detroit Tigers for \$100,000 of Frank Navin's money, then opened negotiations with a millionaire named Tom Yawkey who had just bought the Boston Red Sox and installed Connie's coach and former star, Eddie Collins, as his general manager. Mack may have wanted to see Collins get off to a good start. Whatever his reasons, he let the Red Sox have Lefty Grove, Rube Walberg, and Max Bishop for \$125,000. He got \$20,000 from the White Sox for George Earnshaw. And once again the Philadelphia patriarch had money in the bank and no ball club.

Apologists for Mack swear the old man never was gunning for riches when he sold these stars. That may be so. But dropping players like Cochrane and Grove, the kind of performers who come along just once or twice a decade, is no way to fight for championships. Connie got away with selling one ball club. He never quite got away with selling the second. There are people in Philadelphia who haven't forgiven him yet.

The old man inadvertently reopened the sore subject shortly before the 1948 season got underway when he uncorked a beef about the wholesale unloading of star players by the St. Louis Browns. "I don't understand it at all, and I think it's very bad for our league," said Connie, after the Brownies had peddled Jack Kramer, Bob Muncrief, Walt Judnich, Ellis Kinder, Billy Hitchcock, and the great shortstop, Vern Stephens.

All over the country the hounds of the sports pages leaped at the opportunity to shove the distinguished patriarch's words down his throat. "Who," they chorused, "knows more about the fine art of breaking up ball clubs than Connie Mack? He's a past master at it."

It is, of course, difficult for the most prejudiced Mack enthusiast to

wriggle out of that one. Connie definitely was on thin ice when he slipped the needle into Dick Muckerman and Bill DeWitt of the Browns. After all, Connie practically invented the break-'em-up-and-sell-'em-off technique as an unbeatable method of replenishing the till.

Nor did Connie's upbraiding of the Browns carry any more conviction when he piously lamented that he was thinking only of the good of the league. A lot of people would like to know where Mack buried his concern for the good of the league when he wrecked his own championship clubs and tunneled deep into the cellar for year after monotonous year.

The last of the championship Athletics to leave Shibe Park was Jimmy Foxx. He went to Yawkey's "Gold Sox," as the papers were terming the Boston club. The millionaire Red Sox owner got pitcher Johnny Marcum along with Foxx, and Connie Mack got \$150,000.

That was that. Since the 1934 season, when the White Elephants came home in fifth place, the Mackmen have finished last nine times. They were seventh twice, tied for fifth in 1944, fifth in 1947, and a rousing fourth in 1948, the season that saw them occupy the rarefied heights of first place so often they were dubbed "The Amazing A's." Not even Connie Mack knows what the future holds for them, but few baseball men give the A's a chance to improve their lot. The Yankees, the Tigers, the Red Sox, and the Indians have aggressive owners and lots of money. It's going to be hard for aging Connie Mack to fight those clubs on even terms. If he intends to do it, he's certainly going to have to spend money and take chances. Whether or not he's willing to do that, nobody knows. A lot of folks in Philadelphia are mighty curious.

It would be a mistake to assume that the city Connie has made his home has lost its respect for him. That's a long way from the truth. The people in Philly may get impatient with old Connie, but they still love him. They've shown their affection for him many times.

In 1941, for example, the Pennsylvania State Legislature declared that May 17 of that year would be "Connie Mack Day," and made it a state holiday. When the big day rolled around, over 15,000 fans braved rainy weather to honor the great manager and—against his wishes—change the name of Shibe Park to Connie Mack Stadium.

When you go to Philadelphia today, and visit the ball park, you can see the words *Shibe Park* engraved in the stone archways. And underneath you'll see the more recent black signs with their white letters reading *Connie Mack Stadium*.

True, nobody calls it Connie Mack Stadium, not even the newspapermen in their daily stories. But that's not because of any lack of affection for the old man. Habit is just too strong. Fiorello LaGuardia never got the people of New York City to change the name of Sixth Avenue to Avenue of the Americas, either—for the same reason.

George M. Cohan marked the occasion by writing a special song for

Connie. The famous Yankee Doodle Boy, composer of such songs as "Over There" and "Give My Regards to Broadway," was raised in North Brookfield, not far from Connie's home. He turned out a ditty called, "Connie Mack is the Grand Old Name." You can bet it warmed the bottom of the old manager's heart when he heard it.

In late years, Connie has been keeping more and more in the background as the A's romp through Spring training. He lets his son, Earle, and the coaches handle the team, and he tries to keep out of sight.

Ira Thomas, the Athletics' scout, tells an amusing story which illustrates this. It happened when the A's were doing their training in Montgomery, Alabama, sometimes known as the Cradle of the Confederacy.

One of the rookies trying out for the team came up to Thomas in the lobby of the club's hotel and asked him what the name of the town was, explaining he wanted to mention it in a letter home.

"What?" demanded Ira. "You mean you've been here nearly a week and you still don't know the name of the town? You'd better not let Mack hear about this!"

The rookie looked at him with his mouth open, a puzzled look on his honest young face. "Who," he asked, "is Mack?"

No matter how fast the years pile up on his narrow shoulders, Connie never loses his enthusiasm for the game of baseball. He is so obviously crazy about the sport that you can't help discounting some of the stories that seek to paint him as a miser who is happy only when he's in his counting-house with the gate receipts. Anybody who has spent much time with Connie Mack knows the old man is happiest when he's watching his boys battling to win a ball game. He's seen a lot of games, but not so many that he doesn't still get a bang out of winning them.

The game keeps him young. He gets a new lease on life every Spring. Even the bad times, when the club can't seem to win for losing, Connie takes with a smile. Says he, whimsically: "There is only one thing more mysterious and baffling than the way of a serpent on a rock or the way of a man with a maid, and that is the mental processes of a fielder, a catcher, or a pitcher."

When he tells you something, it's impossible to sit across from him and doubt his sincerity. Perhaps this is a special form of hypnotic influence that old men exert over young men but I doubt it. I prefer to believe Connie meant every word of it when he told me, "My one great desire is to give Philadelphia another great ball team. We'll be in there trying, but I realize it's a question if at my age I'll ever have another world championship club. It's a hard game . . . a hard game."

Connie Mack's famous scorecard doesn't wave vigorously from the corner of the Philadelphia dugout any more. The old gentleman contents himself with directing the overall strategy of the game. But he has no thought of giving up the executive or field leadership of his club.

"Unless I knew I was over 86," he says, "I wouldn't believe it. I feel fine. I like traveling and I love the game of baseball just as much as I ever did. I like being with the boys. I don't use my scorecard in the dug-out like I used to because I don't know all my young pitchers so well. When the time comes when my players get to telling me how the game should be played, then I'll know I'm through. When my brain weakens, and I've become a handicap, then I'll step out—but not until then."

If you're a sentimentalist, you'll send up three silent cheers for the old man who could make a speech like that. If you love baseball not only for the excitement of rooting home your favorite team, but also for the wonderful people who play the game, you'll feel an almost irresistible urge to walk up to Connie Mack and shake his hand and wish him well.

You'll say to yourself, if you are susceptible to an occasional touch of hero-worship, that it sure would be nice, wouldn't it, if the old guy could win another one? Maybe your better judgment would be tugging you in the opposite direction, and maybe something inside you would protest that the people who pay to see the Athletics play ball have a right to a winning team. And that's true. The rights and wishes of the people of Philadelphia have to be considered above all else.

And they're still the people who love Connie Mack most of all.

BOB FELLER, INCORPORATED

By Ed Fitzgerald

ROBERT William Andrew Feller, a son of the Iowa corn country, a laborer whose staggering hire is paid by the Cleveland Indians of the American League, unquestionably is the most celebrated baseball pitcher of his generation.

Only two or three other big-league ballplayers can compare to this muscular farm boy's history as a box-office draw. The customers have for years poured into the parks all around the circuit to see him shackle the batters, just as they once good-humoredly shoved their way in to see the incomparable Babe Ruth blast his gargantuan home runs. Bob is a gold-plated magnet, a one-man show, a performer every baseball fan must see before he can say he has lived.

Though the Cleveland club probably has paid Bob as much as \$90,000 a season to throw baseballs, nobody will hear President Bill Veeck complaining too loudly about Feller's price tag. From the early days of Spring training through the last games on the schedule, Bob packs the stands. Just incidentally, he also wins a pile of ball games for the Indians.

It was generally agreed that Feller had a bad year in 1948 but he still won 19 games, including eight big victories down the stretch of the hottest American League pennant race there ever was. Any big-league manager would love to have a dozen pitchers who could perform like that on an off year.

Watching him, you get the feeling you're looking at one of the great ones. You can't get away from it. Greatness is reflected in Bobby Feller's easy, casual grace as he rockets his fast ball past another slugger. Greatness is in the air when he's on the mound, leaning forward in that intent way of his to get the catcher's signal. You tingle inside as you watch the abject helplessness of the hitters. You find yourself crossing your fingers and hoping he's really hot, hoping he turns them all away hitless, so you can go home and tell your pals you saw him do it.

The experts agree that this pitching prodigy barely in his thirties is already worthy of a place alongside the masters of bygone days—the Mathewsons, the Johnsons, the Alexanders, the Groves, the Hubbells, and the Deans. Yet when you look at him, when you shake his powerful right hand and speak to him, you forget his awesome reputation and dis-

cover he's a real guy. He may make more money than the President of the United States, but Bob Feller never acts as though he thought he were better than anybody else. Luckier, maybe, but not better.

This is not to be construed as implying that Bullet Bob doesn't think he's the best pitcher in the business. That he does—and why not? Through the season of 1948 he won 177 major-league ball games for a team that only rarely was good enough to be a pennant contender, and not until '48 was good enough to win the flag. He has pitched two no-hitters, one against the Chicago White Sox and another against the New York Yankees. He has pitched 10 one-hit games. Five times he has won 20 or more games in a single season. As he went along, he set a new major-league record for strikeouts in a single game, fanning 18 Detroit Tigers in a 1938 game. He broke Rube Waddell's season strike-out record of 343 by whiffing 348 batters in 1946. For a young fellow approaching the peak of his powers, that's a moderately good record.

But everybody knows that much about the famous fireballer. What the average fan doesn't know about is Bob's shrewd business sense. This small-town youngster, with only a high-school education, has made himself into a financier and businessman of considerable stature. You wouldn't suspect this quality when you first observe Bob. He's got a homespun, open face—a face that carries the map of midwestern America as plainly as Abe Lincoln's did. It's the kind of face that makes you think of words like guileless, artless, even naive.

You'd be about as safe calling Feller naive as you would be standing up at the plate and daring him to dust you off with that fast ball. Bob is such a competent, successful business man, and has so many far-flung interests, that he has incorporated himself in the State of Ohio under the name of Ro-Fel, Inc.

His newest business enterprise is in radio broadcasting. Bob decided he'd like to try radio early in 1946 and by Spring, he was completing a deal with a Cleveland radio producer named Arden Gifford. Bob is running a weekly half-hour recorded show on which he interviews guest stars and talks about baseball matters.

When I first saw him, he was just back from a visit to Paramount Studios in Hollywood, where he visited Bob Hope (who owns a modest piece of the Indians) and Bing Crosby.

"Did you have a good time?" one of his teammates asked.

"Sure did," said Robert. "Not only did I have a good time, but I signed up both of them for guest shots on my radio show."

That's Feller for you. He enjoys every minute of life, but he's always on the alert for a chance to make a shrewd deal. Which is the reason he banked about \$70,000 from the Cleveland club for his 1946 salary, then by his own efforts matched that sum with roughly \$60,000 more, realized from various and sundry enterprises.

Despite his big-business flair, Bob manages to act like any other young man. He's cheerful and fond of good company, quick with a gag and good-natured when he's the butt of one. One of the Cleveland sportswriters was in Bob's hotel room when he returned from that Crosby-Hope visit. Hope gave Feller a copy of each of his three books, with suitable inscriptions. One of the inscriptions read, "It is always a pleasure to watch you. Now read a little of me."

"Did Hope ever see you pitch?" the sportswriter asked.

"No," Bob answered. Grinning, he said, "I've paid to see him lots of times, but he's never paid to see me." He thought for a second, then burst out laughing. "Hey," he added, "now that he owns a piece of the ball club, he never will!"

There can be little doubt but that Bob is the kind of guy who could have been successful in any line of endeavor. If he'd stuck to farming, he'd have been a whiz at it. That radio show is an excellent example of Bob's versatility and persistence. When he first got the idea, he made a sample recording for some radio people.

"Well," they said doubtfully, "it may work out in time. But you're about a year away."

Completely undisturbed, Bob went back to work, rehearsed furiously, got advice from everyone he knew who was in a position to give it, and made another record. Back to the radio executives he went, and played the new one.

"Well, okay," they said. "That's good enough for us. Let's talk business."

Business, to Bob Feller, means business every minute. For instance, he told me that when a national magazine recently ran a cover-story about his business acumen, he settled not just for the publicity value involved, but also got half the substantial check.

Under the sponsorship of the Des Moines (Iowa) *Register* syndicate, Bob writes a newspaper column which adds a sizable sum to his gross take for the year. He has made deals for the use of his name in endorsements by the Popsickle, Wheaties, Gillette, and Wilson Sporting Goods people. And, of course, he cleaned up on several post-season barnstorming tours.

Bob saw the huge sums of money which the Cleveland club made, month in and month out, by exploiting the name of Bob Feller. So he decided to get on the bandwagon himself. He signed a squad of first-class major-leaguers, booked a cross-country tour, and set out to make some real money. The skeptics snorted and said he'd lose his shirt, that he was stepping way out of his league. "Feller ought to have enough sense to stick to pitching," they criticized. They should make the kind of money Bob made on that 1946 tour.

"I risked about \$50,000 on the project," Bob says. "Just the two air-

planes we used cost me \$17,000. But I was sure we'd get it back, and we did." He smiled, and added, "And then some."

Not only did Feller do all right on the barnstorming expedition, but the ballplayers who strung along with him on the deal had no cause to regret it, either. Spud Chandler, Stan Musial, Charley Keller, Ken Keltner, Rollie Hemsley, Jeff Heath, and the others did better than all right. Especially Musial. The big Cardinal slugger was in the World Series against the Red Sox that year and drew \$3,757 for his share of the winner's melon. Joining Feller's circus after the Series, he pocketed a cool \$6,200.

"Everybody made money," says Bob, "but Uncle Sam made the most." As far as future barnstorming projects are concerned, Bob isn't sure. He has been criticized severely for letting outside activities interfere with his work for the Indians and he may well decide to confine his future pitching to his assignments for Cleveland.

Bob made a good piece of change out of his book, "Strikeout Story," published in 1947 by A. S. Barnes. Early that Spring the boys on the Cleveland squad were kidding him about his lackadaisical performances in exhibition games. "You'd better get somebody out pretty soon if you expect to sell any of those books," one of the boys told him.

"Yeah, you're not kidding," Bob replied. "I got a telegram from New York, after the Giants and the Cubs had blasted me for five runs apiece in exhibition games, saying four bookstores had cancelled their orders."

"Don't feel too bad, Bobby," said another ballplayer. "At least you're keeping your hits well scattered. Some inside the park and some outside the park."

Everybody in the room roared at that one, Bob included. That's one thing about the guy. He's no prima donna. He's genuinely liked by all the boys on the team. It could easily be otherwise, when you consider how much more money Bob makes than the others do. The gang likes to meet in Bob's room, likes to eat with him, or go out for some ice cream with him on a hot Summer night.

"He's a great guy," one of his teammates told me. "With all the headlines he's gotten, and all the big fat checks he's picked up, you'd think he'd get to figuring he was the most important man in the world. But not Feller. He's just a helluva nice kid who happens to have the best right arm in baseball."

The conversation switched to the way Bob gets belted around in Spring exhibition games these years. "The day you see me bear down in an exhibition game early in the year," Bob proclaimed, "is the day I'm through. That's the quickest way there is to ruin your arm."

Picking up the phone, Bob called room service and treated the gang to some light chow. The operator couldn't make out his name. "Feller," he said, repeatedly, "F-E-L-L-E-R, Feller. Room 561."

"Stop trying to impress her," the boys hollered. "You're wasting your time. And don't go into the bathroom when the check comes." Bob grinned like a kid and threw a pillow at his tormentors. His sense of humor is always working, especially when the joke's on him. You can't help but like a guy like that. It's obvious the boys found that out a long, long time ago.

Marshall Bossard, a Cleveland groundskeeper, picked up the phone and told the operator, "I want to make a long distance call to Cleveland." The gang roared. Feller arched an eyebrow at him but Marshall, a fast-talking character, kept right on going. "No, this isn't Mr. Feller," he said, "but charge it to Feller's account."

"Keep going, boy," said Feller. "You'll never get another chance like this. I'll have the phone taken out the next time you come up." Bossard got his wife and started talking. Bob grabbed a portable radio off his desk and hauled it up next to the telephone. Turning it on full blast, he picked up a dance band. All the guys yelled, "Happy New Year," and Feller imitated a girl's voice.

"It's just the boys," Bossard was explaining. "Honest, honey, it's just the boys. And don't worry about how long you talk. It's on Feller."

Someone mentioned the \$25-a-week expense allowance the ballplayers get during Spring training. It's a favorite topic. "That's why they're attracting so many college guys," said Feller. "Those football players are used to that kind of dough. It doesn't shock them."

They talked about going out for a while. Bob looked at his watch. It was 10 o'clock. "Have to be back by midnight," he announced, "or it'll cost us \$150. That's six weeks' pay." Coming from him, that brought the house down.

Bob Feller, whose name is as widely known in America as that of any statesman, artist, scientist, or entertainer, has been crazy about playing baseball all his life. He was born on a farm in Van Meter, Iowa, on November 3, 1918. Instead of being crowded for play space on a city street, he had all the room in the world—and he used it to play ball every time he got a chance.

The story of how Bob's father, Bill Feller, set out to make him a big-league pitcher, has been told over and over again. It's a little exaggerated, which is bound to happen when any story has been retold so often, but there's no doubt that Bob's Dad helped his career more than somewhat.

"My father didn't deliberately plan to turn me into a major-league pitcher," Bob says, "but he did encourage my love for baseball, and he always did his best to teach me what I wanted to know. We lived in a town where everybody was crazy about baseball, so it was easy for a boy to grow up with the idea that a ball game was just about the most fun in the world."

I asked him if it was true that his father always encouraged him to

skip farm chores in order to concentrate on baseball practice. Bob grinned. "No," he answered. "That wasn't the case at all. We did plenty on that farm besides play ball."

But baseball was very much in Bob Feller's blood, and he couldn't have hidden it if he wanted to—which he didn't. "Every time I went to town with my mother to do some shopping," he recalls, "I'd pick up a ball in one of the stores, and she'd have to buy it for me. Not necessarily a baseball. It could be a tennis ball, a plain rubber ball—any kind of a ball. Then I'd take it home and play catch, or bounce it off the wall, or whatever came into my head. I was always throwing a ball at something or someone."

Bob did his first serious pitching for an amateur team called the Oak Views, which his father organized. The team played on a diamond hacked out of a Feller wheat field. It was good experience for Bob. He didn't always pitch. Sometimes he played shortstop, but he always played. At the same time he was beginning to pitch for the Van Meter High School team, so he was getting plenty of baseball. He was ready for it. Feller, who stands six feet one and usually weighs around 185 pounds today, was a big, rangy boy. He had the stamina to play every day even then.

It was in 1935 that his father signed a contract with the Indians for the boy. But Bob was too young to join the club yet. He continued to work around the farm, helping his dad worry about their 75 head of Hereford cattle, their 75 hogs, and the 360 acres they had under cultivation. Pitching semi-pro ball on Sundays, he made as much as \$35 and \$40 a game. No wonder the rawboned farmboy decided baseball would be a good career.

The whiplash arm that handcuffed the semi-pro batters around Van Meter was shortly to make an electrifying impression upon all the baseball fans in the United States.

As most everybody knows, there was a lot of fuss about Bob's signing with the Indians. As briefly as possible, this is the real story. Pro baseball has a rule which says a major-league team may not sign an amateur player until he has first labored for a minor-league team. Only college players are excepted from this rule, the idea being that some college products may already have the stuff to move right under the big tent. But, like many a baseball rule, this regulation has been adroitly violated more than several times.

The technique favored by big-league clubs eager to circumvent the rule is simple. When a scout spots a hot sandlot prospect, he notifies a friendly minor-league team. The minor-league club then hires the player with the understanding that the major-league team which discovered him has an option on his services.

So when a scout for the Indians stumbled across Feller at Des Moines,

Iowa, in 1935, he arranged for the boy to sign a contract with the Fargo-Moorhead team of the Northern League. Before Bobby played a game for Fargo-Moorhead, the Indians had him transferred to the more important New Orleans club of the Southern Association. Then, before he played a single game for the Pelicans, Cleveland maneuvered to have Feller placed on the voluntarily retired list. That made him the youngest retired performer in baseball history. He was 16.

The year 1936 rolled around, and Bob's baseball was still confined to the Van Meter High School squad, on which he was going great guns. He hurt his arm, though, before the end of the high-school season, and his team missed a good chance to win the state championship. Then the Indians, who still weren't sure what they had in this highly recommended fireballing youngster, sent for him.

From high school team to major-league uniform in one month, that's Feller's record. You can bet your new car that it isn't done that way very often. But pitchers like Feller don't come along very often. The muscles in his lean right arm have the strength of steel beams and the elasticity of rubber bands.

Another of the standard Feller legends has it that when he first went up, Bob earned his keep selling peanuts in the Cleveland ball park. Bob laughs at that story. "I never saw a peanut there," he told me. "But I threw a lot of baseballs, and I worked plenty hard." It wasn't long before the Indians got an urge to see what he could do. What they found out not only astonished them and opened the eyes of everybody in the trade, but amazed fans from East to West.

The Indians were tangling with the St. Louis Cardinals in an exhibition game. Feller was sent in for a three-inning workout. He tossed a few half-speed pitches to catcher Steve O'Neill, and he was ready to go. He went—and how! Nine Cards trudged up to the plate, and eight of them struck out, in those three innings. That came very close to being passable pitching. The word went out over the telegraph wires that the Indians had another Walter Johnson. It took some time for the boys in the press box to correct that first observation. Cleveland didn't have "another" anything. The Indians had the one and only Bob Feller.

This farmboy from Iowa had a fast ball that smoked. He reared back and chucked the ball in there like a Navy dive-bomber going downhill. The boys had never seen anything like it. The batters were lucky to get a good look at the ball, much less a piece of it. They just swung. It looked better to strike out that way than to stand there with your bat on your shoulder. Anyway, they figured, you could always get lucky. But not many of them got lucky against Feller.

True, young Bob wasn't always sure where the ball was going when he let fly. But that, after all, was the batters' worry. And they worried plenty. Not many of them were willing to take a substantial toe-hold

at the plate against Bobby. They were wary up there, plenty cautious, always ready to hit the dirt.

Even today Bob will tell you, "It's a help to have a reputation as a strikeout pitcher. It makes the batters feel they've got to prove themselves against you, rather than vice versa. But for a real help there's nothing like a reputation for having a hot fast ball that's a little bit wild. Then they really worry up at that plate."

Delighted at Bobby's prowess, the Cleveland club nevertheless had good reason to be deeply alarmed. Numerous other teams weighed in with offers to buy the young pitcher. When the Indians refused to sell him, the rival clubs began to ask embarrassing questions about his background. "Does Cleveland legally own him?" they wanted to know. It was a very interesting question. Before it was answered, it just about stood the baseball world on its collective ear.

A minor-league club, Des Moines of the Western League, protested to Baseball Commissioner Landis that Feller legally could not be the property of the Indians. Des Moines pointed out the incontrovertible fact that Rapid Robert, as the papers already were calling him, never had played for a minor-league team, therefore could not join the majors.

The good Judge took the case under advisement. It was a potato hot enough to sizzle even the Judge's competent hands. The alternatives were precarious, to say the least. If Landis simply ruled that Cleveland owned Feller, he would place himself in the position of blinking at a flagrant violation of the baseball law he was sworn to uphold. On the other hand, if he ruled that Bob was a free agent and could be signed by anyone, he'd be working something of an injustice against the Indians, who had discovered the boy. And he'd be paving the way for similar questions about the ownership of other big-leaguers who had been brought up in like manner.

Calmly awaiting Landis' decision, young Bob Feller had, roughly, \$100,000 at stake. He could have gotten all of that, and maybe more, for signing with another team if he were declared a free agent. But Bob was loyal to his team. When the newspaper boys asked him what team he'd like to play for, he answered firmly, "Cleveland. I want to play for the Indians."

The Judge fixed it so he could. Cleveland, Landis ruled, could keep Feller, but would have to pay a modest \$7,500 to Des Moines because of the minor-league club's claim that its scouts had seen Feller first. It was a wise decision. It saved a lot of confusion all around. Bobby Feller went back to work. In a few short months he proved beyond doubt that he was one of the greatest pitchers the game had ever seen.

In that first season with the Indians—actually it was only part of a season—young Feller appeared in 14 games. He won five and lost three, striking out 76 batters in 62 innings. His strikeout record, better than

one per inning, was what captured the fancy of the public, and gave the best indication of his future greatness.

The first time Bob Feller walked out to a major-league mound for an official American League game, he struck out 15 batters and licked the St. Louis Browns. Two weeks later, hurling against the Philadelphia Athletics, he struck out 17 men to tie Dizzy Dean's major-league strike-out record. He was 17 years old, that's all, but he had a bullwhip for a right arm, and he knew how to get the most out of it.

"What do you do when you're in trouble, Bob?" the newspaper boys asked him. "You don't know much about the weaknesses or strong points of the players in the league yet, do you?"

"No," the kid from the Iowa farm answered. "The men at Cleveland told me not to worry about things like that. They said for me just to throw that fast one in there, so I do."

Naturally, there were plenty of scoffers around to proclaim loudly that Feller was a freak, a pitching clown, a rubber-armed kid who couldn't possibly last. If they said it where people could hear them, they're probably still hiding.

Which brings up an amusing story. During the Spring of 1937 the Indians played a string of exhibition games with the New York Giants, and Feller was one of the big points of interest on that tour. Not only to the customers, but to the ballplayers themselves. Rowdy Richard Bartell, the Giants' shortstop, watched Bobby a while and made up his mind in a hurry.

"Not as fast as Van Mungo," he announced. Around the ball park went Bartell, never noted for being a close-mouthed individual. "Not as fast as Mungo," he repeated. As always happens, word of Bartell's pronouncement got back to Feller. The kid from Van Meter nodded soberly, but said nothing.

The first game in which Bartell got a chance to bat against Feller was an exhibition at Vicksburg, Mississippi. He managed to lift a towering fly to the infield. Back to the Giants' bench he trotted, cheerfully assuring one and all that, "just as I said, he's not as fast as Mungo." Nineteen times Bartell faced Feller on that trip, and 16 times he struck out.

Dick got madder and madder but he couldn't do a thing about it. Nor would he retract his opinion. Every time he fanned, he stubbornly proclaimed, more loudly each time, that Feller wasn't as fast as Mungo. In later years Bartell was traded to the Detroit Tigers, and had to bat against Feller during the regular season. He kept right on striking out, and he kept right on minimizing Bobby's greatness.

There is nothing on record to prove that Feller bore down extra hard on the peppery little shortstop, but he smiles when you remind him of the incident today. "Oh, Bartell," he says. "Yeah, he sure was stubborn."

In 1937 Bob began to catch on a little to the niceties of big-league

play. He still wasn't a polished pitcher by any means, but he had that smoking fast ball. Everybody in the business knew it was just a matter of time. He won nine games that year, and lost seven, striking out 150 batters in the process. His earned run average was 3.38, which is enough to keep any pitcher on a major-league payroll at a good salary.

Things were even better in 1938, when he won 17 games and lost 11. That was the year he set a new major-league strikeout record for a single game, breaking the mark he shared with Dizzy Dean by fanning 18 Detroit Tigers. That record still stands. It's one of the records Bob has his eyes on. "I'd like to break it before I'm through," he says, quietly. "I think I have a pretty good chance to do it."

That was Feller's last moderately good year. From then on he was up with the pitching leaders every season. Backed up by a team that was little better than mediocre either at bat or in the field, he won 24 games in 1939, 27 in 1940, and 25 in 1941, his last pre-service year. In 1940 he pitched his first no-hitter, setting down the Chicago White Sox without a hit on April 16, the opening day of the season for both clubs.

Maybe the first time all the critics reached a real degree of unanimity in appraising Bob's greatness was when he pitched in the All-Star game in July, 1939. When Bob finished his work in that one, there weren't many left who would argue that he lacked any of the qualifications.

The Indians' fireballer was waved into the game in the middle of the sixth inning, relieving Tommy Bridges of the Detroit Tigers. The rangy kid with the big "Cleveland" on his chest was in a tough spot. His American League team had a 3-1 lead, but the National Leaguers had the bases loaded with only one out. There were 63,000 fans in New York's Yankee Stadium as the husky farmer boy from the tall corn country strode out to the mound. He looked about as nervous as if he were going to mail a letter at the box on the corner.

Arky Vaughan of the Pirates, always a dangerous hitter, was up. That meant Bob was in trouble right away. Feller loosened his arm with a few practice pitches, then walked off the mound and studied the batter. The fans tightened up. This was baseball drama at its peak.

Bob walked on the rubber, wound up, and let it ride. His first pitch was a fast ball, low. Vaughan swung at it, and topped a grounder to second-baseman Joe Gordon of the Yankees. Gordon flipped it to Boston's Joe Cronin at second, and Joe shuttled it to Detroit's Hank Greenberg at first. A double play, and the side was out. Bob didn't take a bow, but neither did he act surprised. He just hustled into the American League dugout while the crowd roared. The fans knew that day that this kid had everything. He had the arm, sure, everybody had known that all along. But now they knew he had the heart, too—a heart like a watermelon. "He doesn't scare easy," the bleacher boys said to one another. And they knew what they were talking about.

For the rest of that colorful inter-league battle, Feller held the folks spellbound with his masterful control, his baffling change of pace, and above all, that sizzling fast ball. His speed was working. He had it that day, just as he's had it so many days since. The ball whistled down off the hill, and when it rocketed into the catcher's glove, it made a smack you could hear all over the park. Not until the ninth inning did a National Leaguer get a hit off Bob. Then he squelched the rally by striking out Johnny Mize of the Cards and Stan Hack of the Cubs to protect the AL's 3-1 margin.

There was no one left that day to dispute that Bob had arrived. There was no one to say he was a flash-in-the-pan. When the big Cleveland star walked off the mound after striking out Hack in the ninth inning, 63,000 fans got to their feet and gave him an ovation he'll never forget. There was respect in every handclap, and Bobby appreciated it.

"If you put out," he told me, recalling the incident, "the folks won't let you down, that's for sure." It's a pretty good philosophy.

In the three big years Feller enjoyed before he enlisted in the U. S. Navy, he left no doubt that he was the No. 1 pitcher in baseball. Despite the fact that the Indians didn't have what it took, Bobby scored one personal triumph after another. He became just about the greatest single drawing card in the game. If the Saturday afternoon papers announced that Feller would pitch for Cleveland on Sunday, you couldn't get near the ball park the next day. When he went to the other cities on the circuit, a brief announcement that he would be on the mound was enough to pack the stadium.

Bobby developed rapidly as a pitcher. In the beginning he had the fast ball, and not much else. His fast one continued to be very much alive, still the big weapon in his armory, but he worked hard on a curve ball. Today, most baseball men will tell you that Feller's "jug" is the best in the business. Add the high, hard one and the curve to a cute change of pace, throw in brilliant control for good measure, and you have the equipment of a great pitcher. Which is just what Robert William Andrew Feller is. There's not much question but that he already has won a place for himself in the Cooperstown Hall of Fame.

Earned run averages are the payoff for a big-league pitcher, and in that department Bob doesn't bow to anyone. His ERA was 2.85 in '39, 2.62 in '40, and 3.15 in '41. In 1946, his first complete season since coming out of the Navy, he hung up an earned run average of 2.18. That's professional pitching, brother, with a couple of capital P's.

Bob has become such an institution now that he's the subject of innumerable jokes, some of which may have a foundation in fact and some of which may be pure fiction. One of the best is told by Lefty Gomez, the former Yankee southpaw, who was always as much at home at a speaker's table as on the mound.

"I was pitching against Cleveland at the Stadium," says Gomez, "and Feller was throwing them up for the Indians. Bobby was fast this day, and when you figure how fast he is when he isn't feeling well, you can imagine how the ball was hopping this time. Well, the Indians are beating us, but the Yankees never quit trying to hit the ball out of the park. Me, too." (Gomez, of course, was justly renowned for his inability to hit the ball past the plate.)

"Along about the eight inning," Lefty continues, "I got up for the third or fourth time. I'd been having a bad day. Hadn't had a hit yet, which is very unusual for me. Feller gives me a scornful look and winds up. He lets it go, and I lean over the plate to watch it. I never saw it. It just went 'Bzzzz' and into the catcher's mitt. The umpire hollered, 'Strike one!'

"I dug in and waited for the next one. Same thing. I never saw it. 'Strike two!' the ump yelled. The ball went back to Feller, and again Bob wound up. I was really tense this time, 'cause I don't like to look so bad up at the plate. The ball left his hand, but I couldn't follow it. It was just a blur of white in the air, and that noise, 'Bzzzz.' The umpire screamed in my ear, 'Strike three!' That made me sore. I didn't think he saw it either, so I turned around and beefed, 'Hey, Mac, didn't that one *sound* a bit low?'"

Prior to 1948, the only pennant-contending team Feller had the pleasure of playing with was the 1940 crew. That year the Tribe was tough, with good defensive play and a fair amount of power to back up capable pitching. Feller himself won 27 games and lost only 11 that year, while striking out 261 batters. But that was the year of the famous Cleveland player mutiny against Manager Oscar Vitt—and the dissension in the ranks was too much of a handicap to overcome.

Feller doesn't talk much about it, but you get the impression that he sided with the rest of the mutineers in having about as much affection for martinet Ossie Vitt as he'd have for a rattlesnake. I heard him talk about the incident once to a Cleveland sportswriter, though, and his comment was revealing.

"Pretty bush league, wasn't it?" Bob inquired.

"A little," the writer admitted.

"About a hundred and one per cent," Feller stated with a growl. I definitely got the impression that he regretted it now.

Some of the other Cleveland players recalled when Vitt made the rounds of the locker-room after the last game of the 1940 season. He hadn't been fired yet, but the Indians had lost the pennant by a hair, and everybody knew the player rebellion was the reason why. Since it would be difficult to trade away a whole ball club, it was commonly accepted that Ossie wouldn't be back next year.

Ossie went around and shook hands gravely with all the boys, but

said nothing. Only when he came to his young shortstop, Lou Boudreau, did he speak. His voice was choked, but he said quietly, "Lou, you were great." He repeated it, with a catch in his throat. "Lou, you were great."

Vitt must have been a better-than-fair judge of men, because good-looking Lou Boudreau has been managing the Cleveland Indians ever since the season of 1942 and his reputation has grown with the years. Not only does he manage the ball club, but he also finds time to play the best game of shortstop you can see anywhere in the major leagues. Always close to a .300 hitter, and a classic fielder, Boudreau hit a fat .355 as he led the Tribe to the world championship in 1948. He's always pressing, always fighting to win, always unwilling to concede defeat until the last man is out.

You don't have to hang around Feller long to discover that he has a healthy respect—and liking—for his manager. The two seem to get along fine together. Boudreau never shows any sign of jealousy of his high-salaried pitcher, and Feller never exhibits the slightest sign of temperament when he's given an order by his year-and-a-half-older boss.

For a farm boy with a limited education, Feller has remarkable poise, and is extremely well-spoken. He speaks up when you talk to him, and he says what's on his mind without fumbling for words. That big warm grin makes you like him, and so does his obvious interest in what you're saying. He's a busy young man, and his name and face are known in all the 48 states, but he's courteous to everyone he meets, and he's never too busy to make a new friend.

Feller did his most important personality sales job back in 1940, when he visited Rollins College in Florida with a friend. The friend introduced him to an attractive co-ed named Virginia Winther, whose home was in Waukegan, Illinois. For over two years Bobby courted Miss Winther in the only way open to a constantly traveling professional ballplayer—by telephone and telegraph. They were planning marriage when the shock of Pearl Harbor hit the nation.

Two days after the Japanese bombs had fallen on the naval station of Pearl Harbor, Bobby Feller enlisted in the United States Navy. He was actually sworn in on December 11, 1941, four days after the terrible day that marked the start of the war. You don't have to write any glowing statements about Feller's war record. It speaks for itself.

Bob got his boot training at Norfolk, Virginia, in a Navy physical education school, but he got tired of that in a hurry. He volunteered for gunnery training, telling his superiors he wanted sea duty. And Bob did this without speaking through newspapers, without making any noises like a martyr. He just did what he thought was right, and did it quietly. It's easy to say that big-name athletes aren't the kind of men to get excited about fighting the dirty end of a war. Feller did. His record is as proud as that of any less-renowned fighting man.

In January, 1943, two major changes occurred in Bob's life. On the eleventh day of the month, his father died. That was a tremendous blow to young Feller. It was no ordinary father-son relationship that he enjoyed with his dad. From his youngest days, Bob and his father had been pals. They liked the same things, thought the same way, and got a kick out of each other's company. His father long had been Bob's chief counselor. It was a sad young man who went home on leave to Van Meter for the funeral. He helped bury his father from the fine new house which his baseball earnings had built.

On the sixteenth day of the month, convinced there was no point in delaying the wedding further, Bob married Virginia Winther. At first the young couple thought of waiting until the war ended, but now Bob felt they'd be wiser to marry right away. The wedding took place in the bride's home town, Waukegan. The young Fellers have two boys, Stephen and Marty.

Rated a Chief Specialist after his gunnery training, Bob went to sea with the battleship Alabama in December, 1942. On his first cruise he saw Newfoundland, Iceland, England, and Scotland. He came back to the States for five days in August, 1943. Then he shipped out for the Pacific.

Bob was in Pacific waters close to two years, crossing the Equator 28 times—unless he lost count somewhere along the way. You may recall seeing occasional pictures of him playing in pickup ball games in the New Hebrides or the Fiji Islands. His ship hit those places. It also hit Bougainville, the Marshalls, the Gilberts (including Tarawa), Truk in the Carolines, Saipan and Guam in the Marianas, and the Philippines, when the boys were pitching lead instead of baseballs.

Bob was in charge of a 40-millimeter quadruple-mount anti-aircraft gun on the Alabama's deck. Any sailor will tell you a job like that is hardly a haven when enemy planes are swooping down. But you'll have to get somebody else to tell you, because Bob won't. He'll tell you about the big ball games he starred in, but he won't tell you he won the war.

Now and then Bob got a chance to play ball, but not in any organized competition. He never performed in the Hawaiian circuit, where so many big-leaguers enjoyed comfortable berths during the war. His baseball, such as it was, was played in places like Ulithi and Majuro, tiny coral rocks in the vast expanse of the South Pacific.

When he got back to the States, in 1945, Bob was sent to the Great Lakes Training Station, and put in charge of the baseball team. That was his first cinch job of the war, and nobody stepped forward to say he hadn't earned it. Bob was discharged at Chicago on August 22, 1945. He immediately rejoined the Cleveland team.

"One of the finest things that ever happened to me," he says, "was the civic reception Cleveland gave me the day I came back. About a thou-

sand people showed up at the reception, which was held on August 23, an open date for the ball club. It made me feel good all over. So good, in fact, that I beat Hal Newhouser and Detroit, 4-2, in my first game the next night."

In his return game, Bob gave up four hits and struck out 12 men. No wonder the Cleveland papers let themselves go in columns of glad rejoicing. Their big man was back. Now maybe the Indians could pull themselves out of their doldrums. Bob finished out the season, winning five games and losing three. It wasn't a rave performance, but when you figure that he just came out of a four-year retirement, it makes you sit up and take notice.

After the season Bob went to Florida with his wife for a belated honeymoon. He got a good rest, and felt ready to go. Before the Indians assembled for Spring training, though, he ran a free baseball school in Florida for war veterans. Hugh Mulcahy, Bucky Walters, Tommy Bridges, Buddy Hassett, Charley Keller, and Rollie Hemsley were among the ballplayers who helped him in the venture. Over 150 young veterans enrolled as pupils. Bob got the Tampa Chamber of Commerce to find housing for the boys, talked a couple of sporting goods companies into donating the necessary equipment, and made the school a rousing success. He collected no money for his work, but he got a big pile of satisfaction out of it.

Bob is always in there pitching to do something for somebody. At Great Lakes he met an ambitious young pitcher named Dick Rozek, a southpaw with very little experience. Bob took him under his wing, talked the Indians into giving him a contract, and set about starting him on his way to a major-league career. Last Spring you could see Bob at the training camp most every day, in a huddle with his protégé, telling him how it was done. The impressive thing about this side of Feller is he never makes any fuss about his acts of generosity. He just goes ahead and helps people; he doesn't stop to attract a crowd while he's about it.

Every year Bob pays for the support of one student at Morningside College in Iowa. This little gesture costs him about \$1,000 a year—and how many other big-league ballplayers can you name who spend that kind of dough because they think they ought to help less-fortunate people? The legend that ballplayers are cheap definitely doesn't apply to Feller. He lives well, pays his way, and gives his share away. He just happens to be a nice guy.

A lot of people said as early as 1946 that Feller was through. He had his ears pinned back in Spring exhibition games and the word was passed around he didn't have it any more. How wrong they were is a matter of record. The fireball kid from Iowa hurled 26 victories for the Indians, who were something less than world-beaters. True, he lost 15 games, but men who know the score just shake their heads and say he

could have put most of them into the win column if the team had given him a little more help.

This is something else Feller doesn't weep about. You never hear him griping that he wasted the best years of his baseball life on a bum club. Nor does he cry on your shoulder that he got a poor shake not being able to pitch in a World Series until 1948, when the smoke had curled away from his fast ball and he could no longer overpower the batters.

Bullet Bob came up with just about the greatest game of his life early in 1946 when he invaded Yankee Stadium with the Indians on April 30. It was to be Bob's fourth start of the season. He had won his first, then lost two in a row. The "Feller-is-through" boys were having a field day.

There were only 38,112 fans in the Stadium, not a big crowd for a Feller game. The persistent propaganda that the big right-hander had lost his stuff must have had some effect. But it wasn't bothering Bob. It just made him more determined to show what he could do. The Indian ace is a proud young man. He doesn't like his name to be kicked around by people who don't know what they're talking about.

One after another the vaunted Yankee sluggers stepped up to the plate. Joe DiMaggio, Charley Keller, Tommy Henrich, Phil Rizzuto, George Stirnweiss, Bill Dickey, Joe Gordon, and Nick Etten were playing for New York, with Floyd Bevins on the mound. For nine innings Bob strode to the rubber and took the wraps off his fast one. He fooled the Yanks with his wide-breaking curve, and he teased them with his change of pace. They didn't get a single hit off him, and in the first half of the ninth his catcher, Frankie Hayes, hit a home run to give him a 1-0 lead. For the second time in his major-league career, Rapid Robert fashioned himself a no-hitter.

All over the United States the next day, sportswriters were apologizing for having written that Bob was through. Everybody pointed the finger at everybody else. "He said it," was the password. And in their stories the newsmen wrote of how young Bob fogged them in there, of how he handled himself with men on base, of how he refused to let the pressure get him down. "If this boy doesn't belong with the greatest," one scribe wrote, "the values will have to be revised."

Bob himself says that was his greatest game. "I never was any better," he told me simply. "I had everything that day." The Yanks certainly will agree to that. Six New Yorkers got on base in that historic game, five on walks and one on an error by Les Fleming, the Cleveland first-baseman. Fleming muffed Stirnweiss' drag bunt down the first-base line in the last half of the ninth inning. You can imagine how the crowd sagged when that happened!

You know how it is when you're watching a pitcher move closer and closer to a no-hitter. It doesn't matter which team you want to win; you've got to get behind that pitcher. It happens to everybody, and it

happened to the folks at the Stadium that day. They roared when Hayes hit that ninth-inning homer for Feller, and they didn't want anybody spoiling things now.

When the stocky Cleveland first-sacker kicked Stirnweiss' bunt around, everyone in the stands groaned. Bob was so close! Then they broke out into cheers as, for the first time in Stadium history, the public address system was used to inform the fans of the official scorer's ruling. Fleming was charged with an error on the play. The no-hitter was still safe.

But Feller wasn't out of the woods yet. He still had to get three men out to end the game. He stared down off the rubber at Tommy Henrich, the tough Yankee right-fielder. In the hole was Joltin' Joe DiMaggio, and on deck was Charley Keller. What a cheerful prospect for a pitcher trying to protect a no-hitter!

Henrich sacrificed Stirnweiss to second. That put a man in scoring position, with one out. Big Joe DiMaggio stepped up. The count went to three-and-two on Joe, and tension mounted through the stands. Still Feller worked calmly, with no fuss, taking neither more nor less time than usual. He chewed his charcoal gum steadily, kept a weather eye on Stirnweiss at second and fogged them in there. DiMag laced the payoff pitch on the ground to Lou Boudreau at short. Lou pegged to first for the putout, but Stirnweiss scrambled down to third on the play. Two away, and Charley Keller up. King Kong took a called strike, swung and missed for strike two, then dribbled a grounder to Ray Mack at second for the last out of the game. Feller had done it again.

Trying to make his way across the field to the Cleveland dugout, Bob was besieged by well-wishers. Reporters, photographers, and all the rest jammed the Cleveland dressing room to shake his hand, take his picture, and ask how he felt. Bob wore a mile-wide grin, and tried to take a shower, but it was hard to move a step.

Someone reminded Feller that, according to the grapevine, he wasn't supposed to be any good any more. That got Bobby a little peeved. "Look," he said in a positive voice, "when the time comes that I don't have it any more, I'll be the first to know about it."

The reporters in the crowd noticed that Bob constantly referred to the great game Frankie Hayes had played. "Not only did he hit that homer," Bob reminded the writers, "but he also caught a wonderful game." Feller also heaped praise upon Boudreau for making a great play on a ball Stirnweiss hit through the middle in the first inning. Lou, crossing second, fielded the ball and made the throw for the put-out even though he fell flat on his face.

Johnny Vander Meer of the Cincinnati Reds is the only other active pitcher with two no-hitters to his credit. Vander Meer, of course, hurled his two perfect games in succession back in 1938. He blanked the Braves

and the Dodgers in two straight mound appearances. Feller's no-hitter against the Yanks was the first time the New York club was held without a hit since 1919 when another Cleveland hurler, Ray Caldwell, pulled the stunt.

Feller doesn't go around weeping about it but it's obvious that his 1948 troubles still weigh heavily on his mind. The booing he took for withdrawing from the All-Star Game, his inability to reach the 20-game mark in victories, and his failure to win a game in the World Series as the Indians beat the Boston Braves, are not forgotten. He's hungry to make up for them, to make the people who like to say he's finished eat their words. He especially wants to win a Series game. The memory of that two-hitter he lost to Johnny Sain in the '48 Series opener is fresh in his mind.

He thinks he can do it. He honestly believes he has several first-class years as a starting pitcher ahead of him and then several more as a valuable relief pitcher. And he'll tell you he's being conservative when he says that.

Bob has a mind of his own when he's out there on the rubber, and he doesn't blindly accept whatever signal the catcher gives him. If he thinks the batter is set for his fast one, and the catcher signals for it, Bob will shake him off without a qualm. "When I throw that ball," he says, "I'm convinced it's the right pitch. I'll shake off the catcher every time I don't agree with him." Grinning, Bob sums it up by saying, "I may be wrong, but I'm never in doubt."

For hobbies Bob plays table tennis, golf, and billiards, and goes in for trapshooting. He loves to fly and owns a light sport plane.

Since their marriage Bob and his pretty wife have never had a real home. They've led a vaudeville existence. But Bob recently bought a tract of land in Grand Prairie, Texas. And he has now completed a spacious, permanent home there. Why in Grand Prairie, Texas? "Well," says Bob, "it's wide open country, a great place to raise kids, and the land is self-sustaining." Which sounds like a package of good reasons.

I asked Bob if he expected to invest some money in baseball, either in a minor or a major-league team. "No," he told me, "why should I invest a lot of money to make a little money, when I can still make a lot of money without investing a cent?" He admitted he once was interested in buying the Denver, Colorado, club, but said he changed his mind after making a thorough study of the project.

"After a while," he says, "I hope to build a first class restaurant in Cleveland, and devote a lot of time to it. And I'm thinking of going into partnership with a friend of mine in an aviation corporation. That's the business to be in these days."

Despite the variety of business enterprises which have attracted Bob, he doesn't employ a business manager. "That's why I'm so busy all the

time," he said. "I have to do it all myself." Then he stopped and thought, and added, "Not that it makes much difference. If I had a business manager, I'd have to spend all my time watching him."

Because his career always has been so closely allied with the strikeout, Bob feels a great deal of pride in his 1946 major-league strikeout record. He really extended himself, going down the homestretch, in his great bid to overtake the old Rube Waddell record of 343 strikeouts. And he made it, with five to spare, chalking up 348 before the final gong closed the season. The White Sox were his favorite victims. He got 66 of the Chicago boys. The Senators and Yanks were next in line. He whiffed 59 Senators and 56 Yanks during the year. Russ Savage of the A's, who fanned for Feller eight times, was the chief individual victim. Barney McCoskey of the A's was the only major-league regular Bob didn't get at least once.

Bob has hung up 10 or more strikeouts in 45 games since he first walked out to the mound for the Indians. That's a remarkable record. Speaking of records, Bob says, "I'll miss a lot of them because of the war." But quickly he adds, "I have no regrets about the war, though. Every time I go out to pitch I think about how lucky I was to come back with all my limbs. I did what I thought I should, and you'll never hear me cry about it."

Along with his desire to win a World Series game, Bob confesses to one other ambition. This one, however, is less likely to come about. Discussing the records of old-time pitchers, Bob said, "You know, some day I'd love to take one of those old dead balls, rough it up the way they did in those days, and throw it in there for nine innings. I'd like to see, just for my own satisfaction, how I'd make out."

Most modern baseball experts agree it would be murder—for the batters.

Sometimes Bob's multitudinous activities tire him out. Late one night he leaned out of a hotel room window and said to me, "What a life. Tomorrow I have to cut two records, meet a couple of writers for interviews, sign two side contracts and see some business people about a couple of new deals I've got cooking." He straightened up, stretched, and laughed. "Oh, yeah. If I find time I'm supposed to pitch a game of ball, too." Shaking his head, he said, "You have to make it while you can. Let's get some sleep."

Bob's busy mind finds an outlet in normal high spirits, though. One night as we drove along Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood we passed two cars with their front ends tangled in a slight wreck. Rolling down the window, Bob yelled in a fake feminine voice, "I had the right of way!" Then, changing to a deep growl, he bawled, "Yeah, and you also got a fender in your radiator!" Closing the window, he leaned back satisfied.

A few minutes later he was enjoying himself hugely talking about the

hasty writers who watched him getting banged around in exhibition games in the Spring, then dashed to their typewriters to compose sad laments reading, "there's bad news from the West tonight. Rapid Robert Feller hasn't got it any more."

Shaking his head, and grinning that big farm-boy grin, Bob said, "They ought to know better. But I suppose it's all part of the business."

And nothing that's part of the business has escaped Bob. He hasn't missed a trick. For instance, he's one big-leaguer who doesn't conduct his contract negotiations with his employers on a hit-or-miss basis. "We understand each other," he says of his relationship with the Cleveland team. "The club always has treated me fairly, and I always do my best for the club. That's the only way to go about it."

Going into his contract technique a little more deeply, Bob revealed, "I keep a close check on every penny the club makes from Spring to Fall. Then I estimate carefully how much of that money they made out of my pitching. When it comes time to talk about next year's pay check, I have all the figures down. And I'm not usually very far off, either."

The big pitcher, a successful radio artist, columnist, author, general business man, and organizer of a baseball barnstorming expedition that he turned into a personal gold mine, laughed and concluded dryly, "Heck, they can't kid me. I'm in the business myself."

JOHN MCGRAW

The Little Napoleon

By Jack Sher

WHEN he came to the New York Giants as a player-manager in 1902, Johnny McGraw was a slim, runty, big-jawed, truculent, obstinate, and ambitious young man. The day was July 9, and the ball club was in the cellar.

On June 3, 1932, John Joseph McGraw left the Giants just as he had found them—in last place. He was then almost 60 years old, a corpulent, three-chinned, cantankerous, sick old man who, during 30 turbulent years, had proven beyond all doubt that he was one of the greatest managers the game of baseball has ever known.

None of the Giants of today ever played for McGraw, but he still seems to belong to the present. Hardly a day passes without his name being mentioned in the clubhouse or up in the press box. He belongs to the Polo Grounds the way Babe Ruth does to Yankee Stadium. Old-time players and sportswriters will tell you that when a Giant play misfires, they hear the ghost of McGraw—bellowing, inspiring, and profane.

The name "Giants" would mean little today if it hadn't been for McGraw. They were just another New York ball club when he swaggered on the scene. He made the Giants. In fact he *was* the Giants, responsible for everything the name conveys, gigantic hate and terror, love and respect. For 30 years, McGraw's preposterous personality and baseball genius were more dazzling than the deeds of his greatest stars. There were reasons for calling him "The Little Napoleon." No manager ever dominated the diamond in more complete and dictatorial fashion.

"With my team, I'm an absolute czar," McGraw snapped in 1914. "I order plays and they obey. If they don't, I fine them."

Snarling and screaming, driving his players, brawling with umpires, insulting rival managers and club owners, using his fists as well as the most brilliant brain in baseball, McGraw smashed his way to 10 National League pennants and three world championships. He flaunted his victories before rival clubs and fans. He took his defeats with all the graciousness of an enraged bulldog.

"McGraw was sometimes a terrible sight on that bench when we were losing," said Travis Jackson, former Giant coach and the last of McGraw's great shortstops. "His neck would swell up and his face would turn purple."

One day in 1928, McGraw, Jackson, and several other players were leaving Wrigley Field, Chicago, after dropping a close one to their hated rivals, the Cubs. The stormy manager was in one of his more furious moods, enraged by the decision of an umpire. He was absolutely blind with anger, as Jackson described it, and walked directly in the path of a taxicab. He was knocked flat. The players and a cop picked McGraw up. His face was contorted with pain.

"Do you want to prefer charges?" the officer asked.

"Hell, no!" McGraw yelled. "It was my fault!"

Still fuming, Mac went on to Pittsburgh for a series with the Pirates. Not until he returned to New York, several days later, did he discover that his leg was broken!

Talking to the men who played for McGraw, you discover that either they liked him tremendously, or they detested him. Hank Gowdy, another ex-Giant coach who was playing for McGraw as early as 1910, called him the greatest manager of all time and one of the finest men he had ever known. Travis Jackson felt the same way and both spoke of him as "Mr. McGraw," reverently, as though John J. were hearing every word they said. Frankie Frisch, who left the Giants in a huff after enduring McGraw's cruel tongue-lashings for as long as he could, would not talk about his former manager. His only words were, "Well, he won ball games, that's all I'll say."

McGraw, an unforgiving man himself, would have enjoyed the enmity in Frankie's tone. He respected men who could hold a towering grudge down through the years. He was a man who needed relentless enemies as much as he needed staunch friends. McGraw could be generous, courageous, and lovable, as well as tyrannical, abusive, deceitful, and grossly unsportsmanlike.

John J. (Muggsy) McGraw was not the stuff of which fiction-book heroes are made. He was too wholly human, irascible, and changeable in character. And yet, no man gave more to baseball. He was to our national game what the Wright brothers were to the airplane industry, what D. W. Griffith was to movies, what Pasteur was to microbe-hunting. McGraw was a pioneer, an innovator, an exciting, creative ball-player and manager. He gave us the hit-and-run play that revolutionized baseball. He developed the use of the bunt to its now important status. He was the first manager to hire a ballplayer for the sole duty of being a pinch-hitter.

The stunts McGraw pulled drove opposing players and managers to distraction. He changed baseball from a mere contest of power and skill

to psychological warfare and mental adventure. No modern manager, not even Leo Durocher, would dare take the chances John J. McGraw took to win ball games. He loved to tell about these risky high-jinks, to gloat over the way he outsmarted his rivals.

"We were playing St. Louis one day," he would relate, "and we were five runs behind in the ninth inning. With nobody out, we got two men on base. The next batter hit a long single, which would have scored Murray from second base. As Murray rounded third and started for home, I waved him back. Now why did I do that?" McGraw would pause dramatically. "I'll tell you why. Because I wanted those bases loaded. I knew what effect that would have on the pitcher."

That day, as it was most of the time, the McGraw strategy was right on the beam. Three shouting, dancing, gesticulating Giant base-runners caused the Cardinal hurler to blow sky high and the Giants romped away with the ball game.

In his own peculiar way, McGraw had a tremendous love for his ball-players. He paid them high salaries. He was the first manager to shepherd them into the best hotels in town, insisting in the early rowdy days of baseball that his "Giants" were gentlemen when not on a ball field. He hovered over his charges in watchdog fashion, behaving toward some like a Boy Scout leader, toward others like a tough Army top-kick.

Christy Mathewson, in later years, credited McGraw with winning pennants almost single-handedly. "Every play in the 1904 season was directed from the bench," Matty once wrote. "He took a group of young and inexperienced players and master-minded them into champions."

For a manager to direct a team from the bench was an unheard-of procedure in those days. McGraw played third base for the Giants during his first year as manager, but during a crisis in a game he'd leave the field and guide the team from the bench by signals. Fans and players on the other team rode him viciously for leaving the diamond. They hooted that he was yellow and a quitter. "John J. McGraw never knew the meaning of the word fear," Mathewson explained long afterwards. "He knew he could pull the team through from the bench, concentrate better, see more of what was going on. And he missed nothing."

McGraw's method of playing ball involved the most complicated arrangement of signals ever devised. He claimed to have a set of signs that governed every action that could possibly happen on a ball field. "McGraw, with those lightning and mysterious signals, can move all nine men on a diamond more rapidly than most managers can move one," an admiring sportswriter remarked in 1905. The words were not well received. McGraw was scorched by other scribes who believed he was ruining the game by turning his players into automatons.

"Do what I tell you and I'll take the blame if it goes wrong!" the diminutive spitfire would yell at his Giants.

In most cases, he *did* take the rap. That's why he'd burn like a live coal whenever his team lost. Once, after a guess had backfired and the Giants had been drubbed, McGraw stormed into a bar near the Polo Grounds, downed a few quick ones, and hurled a dozen or so bottles against the wall. After he had calmed down, he handed the bartender \$50 and told him to forget it.

McGraw had an absolute contempt for most ballplayers as thinkers. Christy Mathewson was one of the few he allowed to make his own decisions. The magnificent Matty never let him down, piling victory on victory. The big right arm, rising and falling in the World Series of 1905, pitched three shutouts against the A's to hang up a record that still stands. But again, it was McGraw who deserves credit for giving baseball one of its finest moundsmen. When the young manager took over the Giants, Christy Mathewson was playing first base. McGraw saw Matty throw a couple of balls, hustled him to the mound, and kept him there.

It has been written that McGraw, off the playing field, was cold and distant toward his men, and seldom fraternized with them. It is one of the many half-truths penned about him. McGraw seldom had any half-way emotions toward any man in Giant uniform. He either liked him a great deal, or disliked him heartily. Off the diamond, he was extremely friendly with players he personally liked, played bridge with them, invited them to parties, treated them in lavish and magnificent fashion. Those he did not like, he avoided. But, during games, he was strictly impartial. The devil himself could play ball for McGraw if he had the spirit and skill Mac demanded. Some near-devils did.

There was a saying in the old days, "If you have a bad actor, trade him to McGraw." The Giant authoritarian had a reputation for straightening out the rambunctious young rowdies other managers found too difficult to handle. A fire-eating, rebellious, unmanageable ballplayer was always a challenge to McGraw. One of the classic non-conformists was "Bugs" Raymond, whom Ring Lardner immortalized in fiction.

Bugs, when right, was one of the most terrific twirlers of his time, tossing a spitball that was almost impossible to hit. Mr. Raymond was also equally adept at tossing drinks down his tonsils, eating tons of indigestible food, indulging in madcap stunts, and becoming the life of several parties during the course of a single evening. McGraw signed him up in 1909 and Bugs, inspired by Mac's advice and impressed by his threats, promised to reform.

From Spring training at Marlin, Texas, to the Polo Grounds in New York, Bugs led McGraw a merry chase. The reporters had a field day scribbling about the capers of their beloved hero. They infuriated McGraw, who was striving to reform Raymond.

Depriving Bugs of money and forbidding Giant players to lend him

any was useless. Raymond could always think up some hilarious ruse that would let him continue his night-time adventuring. McGraw even hired a detective to shadow the slap-happy spitballer. One morning after receiving a report from the private eye, Mac called in the newspaper reporters and held a "kangaroo court" with the bleary-eyed Bugs as the defendant.

"Look at him!" McGraw railed. "You all heard Raymond promise me he was going to reform!"

Bugs insisted he had spent an innocent night in his room. So McGraw read aloud the detective's report, which showed that Raymond had spent the evening in various saloons, consuming 48 beers, almost a peck of pretzels, and eight Bermuda onions. Bugs heard the indictment to the end. Then he said indignantly, "Mac, that fellow you had followin' me is lyin'. I never ate no eight onions. I only had three!"

McGraw's sense of humor got the better of him and he joined with the reporters, who were doubled over in laughter. The Giant manager kept Bugs on the club until it was hopeless. The end came one day at the Polo Grounds and it was one of the funniest incidents in baseball history.

Rube Marquard, who was pitching, began to weaken and McGraw sent Raymond to the bullpen to warm up. The Giant bullpen, in the old Polo Grounds, was behind the bleachers. Bugs sauntered out of sight. The next inning, the opposing team began to lambast Marquard. McGraw sent the batboy after Raymond. A few minutes later, the boy came back alone.

"I can't find him," he said. "He's nowhere in sight."

The batboy was sent out again, this time accompanied by a player. They found Bugs in a saloon on Eighth Avenue across from the ball park, happily downing his third slug of rye. He had traded the shiny new baseball McGraw had given him to the bartender for the drinks. McGraw, furious but desperate, sent him to the mound. Bugs wound up, unsteadily, and threw the first ball over the catcher's head, allowing a run to score.

The enraged McGraw chased Bugs out of the Polo Grounds. "You blinkety-blankety, no good bum!" he screamed. "I never want to see you around here again!" And he didn't. Bugs never returned.

But for every failure—and there were very few—McGraw trained and developed hundreds of magnificent ballplayers. Over 200 major-leaguers learned the science of baseball from this determined genius. At one time, almost half the managers in the two major leagues were products of McGraw's skillful tutelage—men like Billy Southworth, Art Fletcher, Casey Stengel, Freddie Fitzsimmons, Bill McKechnie, Frankie Frisch, and Bill Terry, to name just a few.

McGraw led his men like a general. He spotted their weaknesses with

an unerring eye. He used drastic and often cruel methods to change them from average performers to stars. The way he taught Josh Devore to hit left-handed pitchers was a brilliant bit of psychology. Devore, who could belt right-handers with the greatest of ease, was scared witless every time he faced a port-side hurler. He would flinch and step in the bucket. One day, Josh was about to go to bat against a speedy St. Louis southpaw. "Josh," McGraw barked. "You go up there and let him hit you."

"I don't know about that," Devore said, fearfully.

"If you don't," McGraw said, firmly, "it'll cost you 10 dollars."

The manager knew Devore was very close with a buck. Josh edged to the plate and looked back at the flint-eyed McGraw pleadingly. Then he took a deep breath and shoved his hip out in front of the pitcher's fast one. The ball struck him and he trotted down to first, grinning from ear to ear. When he finally got back to the bench, he was still smiling. "Say, Mac," he said, "that fellow couldn't break a pane of glass. It sure gets me sore to think I was afraid of him!"

And from that day on, Devore was murderous against left-handed pitching.

Whenever McGraw was chastised for putting the slug on umpires or slandering rivals, he would swear vengeance and scheme relentlessly until his persecutor was vanquished. But he expected his ballplayers to obey him blindly and accept his harsh discipline without complaint. Most of them did. In 1915, he slapped a \$25 fine on Sammy Strang for hitting a home run!

"Go up there and lay down a bunt," he ordered Strang.

With two men on base and nobody down, Sammy measured the first ball pitched and hoisted it over the left-field wall. He rounded the bases, smiling like a fat cat, and trotted to the bench.

"I told you to bunt," McGraw growled.

"It was right in there, Mac," Strang said. "It floated up there so pretty I just hadda take a poke at it."

"You did, huh?" McGraw said, hotly. "Well, I hope it was worth it, because it's gonna cost you 25 bucks!"

Such stern measures brought on the ire of many fans and caused the sportswriters of the time to belabor the Giant overseer in print. They seldom did it in person. There was always the danger that McGraw might force them to swallow some teeth. Few dared argue with him about baseball.

"He believed he knew more about the game than any man alive," an ex-Giant told me. "And he did. Whenever you hear talk about one of today's managers being great, someone will always compare him with McGraw. But nobody comes close to him. I know, sonny, because I knew John McGraw."

It annoyed McGraw that baseball was not always considered the most important thing in American life, on a par with the scientific discoveries that were changing our nation and the policies that were being formed in the White House. To him, baseball was more than a fine sport and a game to amuse fans. It was a momentous, serious, day-to-day struggle to which he brought all his emotion and an ever-working, inventive brain.

Rival players often swore that McGraw knew more about their foibles and weak points than he did about even his own players. The ace Cardinal pitcher, Harry Sallee, gave the Giants many innings of misery until Mac's keen eye ferreted out the southpaw's one weakness. He broke Sallee's heart in the first inning of the Giants' next game with the Cards.

"I want every man to bunt and keep on bunting," McGraw told his team before the game started. "Poke 'em right near Sallee."

The Giants thought their manager's mind had jumped the track, but they followed his orders. The New Yorkers scored 13 runs in the first inning! McGraw had discovered what other managers had failed to notice—that Sallee couldn't field bunts.

When Babe Adams first broke into the majors, he was considered invincible. McGraw's men licked him the first time he took the mound against them. "The Little Napoleon" used strange psychology that afternoon. "Wait him out," he told his players. "Wait him out every time." The Giants waited. They worked Adams almost to exhaustion, fouling off the good ones, making him heave a minimum of four or five balls to each batter. The score was tied in the 13th inning, when the alert McGraw saw Adams drop his arm to his side in disgust and weariness.

"Now, hit away," the Giant manager ordered his batters.

The Giants did, and they broke up the ball game.

One of McGraw's most frequent boasts was that he had no stars on his ball club. It wasn't true. Diamond celebrities like Mathewson, Rube Marquard, George Burns, Benny Kauff, Ross Youngs, Hack Wilson, Carl Hubbell, Frankie Frisch, and Mel Ott were only a few of the mighty players developed by McGraw. What the Giant boss meant was that he never catered to the star system, but strove to develop all-around, team-performers.

Giant batters were drilled in hitting behind the runner to any field. They were taught "change of pace." In the middle of a game, the entire team might suddenly be ordered to switch from trying to knock the cover off the ball to bunting. The Giants and their rivals were always kept on edge in a McGraw ball game. They never knew what Mac would think up next.

It is doubtful if such colorful, unpredictable, and show-stealing players as the immortal Babe Ruth or today's temperamental Ted Williams would have lasted very long under the aegis of McGraw. Williams, like the Babe, is much too individualistic and hot-tempered to have endured

many tangles with McGraw. But McGraw knew the Babe. He knew Ruth as a ballplayer better than anyone in the game, with the exception of Miller Huggins. It was McGraw's careful, brilliant analysis of the Ruth personality that caused Babe's downfall in the 1922 World Series.

Mac had a reason for going after the Babe. Ruth inadvertently caused one of McGraw's predictions to backfire. At the close of the 1918 season, in a magazine interview, McGraw stated somewhat bombastically, "Me and Wee Willie Keeler drove the big men out of baseball. Our hit-and-run technique made the game flashier and faster and you've seen the last of the home-run kings, which is a good thing for baseball."

That was the Giants' "Miracle Manager" speaking, the man whose past predictions had made him seem infallible. But he hadn't taken into account that big hulk who pitched for the Red Sox in 1918 and played games in the outfield. Ruth hit only 11 circuit blows in '18, a warm-up for the following year. In 1919, as an outfielder in 130 games, the Babe smashed 29 homers, an unbelievable feat that fans considered would never again be equalled. His heroic bludgeoning brought the home run back into the limelight and made McGraw's pre-season oration look ridiculous.

By 1922, when the Giants faced the Yanks in the World Series, Ruth's sensational whacks had proved McGraw very much in error. And the fiery Giant manager had other reasons for not beaming at the advent of the era of the Babe. Until Ruth, McGraw had undoubtedly been the most exciting figure in baseball, the most controversial, the man who had changed the game most. To McGraw, at that time, Ruth was something of a freak and an upstart.

The Series dawned with the Yanks heavily favored. But the Pasha of the Polo Grounds had worked out a special plan for handling Ruth. He knew the Babe expected to be treated with great respect, even awe, by the Giant pitchers and players. Ruth was riding high. He felt sure that McGraw's moundsmen wouldn't dare feed him anything but bad balls and walks.

As the King of Swat minced to the plate for the first time in that Series, McGraw rose from the bench and bellowed at his pitcher, Art Nehf.

"Lay it over for him, Art!" the Giant manager yelled in a voice that could be heard in the bleachers. "Cut the plate for him! This big ox can't hit!"

Ruth looked toward the Giant bench in amazement. Coming from the greatest manager in baseball, this was a terrible insult. The Babe's expression took on embarrassment and anger. Art Nehf tossed him a slow curve that spliced the dish. The over-anxious Bam almost broke his back trying to hit it out of the park. He missed it by a foot.

McGraw grew more sarcastic. "Tell him where you're going to throw

the next one, Art!" he jeered. "Then put it right there! He'll never see it!"

Nehf, following McGraw's instructions, informed Ruth that he was going to toss another one right over the same spot. He did and the fuming Ruth swung and missed. On the third pitch, Ruth struck out and returned to the dugout enormously disgusted.

The gleeful McGraw kept up the humiliating, abusive tirades against Ruth all through the Series, and Babe got only two hits in 17 times at bat for his lowest World Series average on record, .118. Many years later, the Bambino revealed that McGraw's taunts had gotten under his skin and were chiefly responsible for his failure to connect in Ruthian style.

It is also an amazing fact that McGraw called every single pitch his hurlers threw in that World Series! The Yanks—and even McGraw later admitted this—had a far superior team. But the Giants had McGraw.

When McGraw came to the Giants, there wasn't a manager on the horizon who could touch him when it came to baseball savvy and tactics. Fred Clarke, the sparkling player-manager of the pile-driving Pirates, was the most pesky of the lot. Clarke, to use a ring expression, was a "cutie"—one who could concoct tricky devices to pull his team out of a hole. The managerial duels between Clarke and McGraw were always spiked with thrills, heightened by the fact that McGraw was hated in Pittsburgh by the fans and was also carrying on a no-holds-barred feud with Barney Dreyfuss, the Pirate owner.

In a game in 1909, the Giants jumped on the Bucs in the first inning and were connecting with everything the Pirate pitcher tossed their way. Clarke was in a spot. He couldn't take his hurler out of the box immediately, because he had failed to warm up a relief pitcher. In the middle of the Giant clouting spree, Clarke, playing center field, suddenly held up his hand and yelled to the umpire that his shoelace had come untied. The ump called time and it took Clarke 15 minutes to tie that shoelace. McGraw screamed and raged at the "trick." As Fred was fussing over the shoelace, a Pirate relief pitcher was hurriedly warming up.

The game finally got under way again, the Giants' hitting was stemmed, and the Pirates tied it up in the seventh inning. Pittsburgh got two men on base and Clarke came to bat. McGraw held up the game this time, waving left-fielder Harry McCormick in from deep in the garden to a position not far behind the third-baseman. The fans hooted at McGraw. It seemed like a fantastic spot for McCormick to be standing. But a moment later, when Fred Clarke hit a screaming line drive over the third-baseman's head and McCormick made a shoestring catch to save the ball game, everybody's respect for McGraw had increased considerably.

Time and again the daring McGraw would juggle his players about

during a game, planting them in seemingly ridiculous positions on the field. It almost always paid off. He had an uncanny instinct for where the ball was going to be hit. Actually, it was only partly instinct, because no manager studied the habits of rival batters so thoroughly, or had such a memory for their past performances.

The late Bozeman Bulger, a sportswriter who hero-worshipped McGraw and consequently became one of his best friends, told many stories of the manager's magnificent memory. In 1932, talking to McGraw one day in a hotel room, Bulger asked him, offhandedly, if he remembered the first time he saw Casey Stengel in action.

"I certainly can," McGraw came back quickly. "He was playing with Brooklyn, and the first time up he hit a low curve ball over the left-field fence."

That incident had happened in a Giant-Brooklyn clash in 1912. Twenty years had elapsed, but McGraw talked about the details of that unimportant game as though it had been played only a few hours before.

One of the reasons John McGraw seldom forgot anything that happened on a ball field was that he watched every game with fanatic concentration. He could never relax. His nerves were always on edge, and it infuriated him if the players on the bench did not show the same feverish interest in the contest at hand.

In spite of McGraw's despotic behavior on the bench, the majority of the Giants who toiled for him during his 30-year reign of terror and triumphs wouldn't have swapped him for any manager in the league. The husky habitues of the Polo Grounds had a trembling sort of love for their squat, blood-and-thunder manager. He could, speaking as soft as Summer air or breathing fire and brimstone, wring inspired baseball from them. He had the same spirit Rockne had, or perhaps it should be said that the Rock was touched with the same wand as McGraw.

Mel Ott, who has spilled a few million words of admiration on McGraw, told me, "He was rough as hell at times, but let any outsider say a word against any of us and we were ready to fight."

When McGraw couldn't win games and pennants by brain power alone, he did it by sheer force of will power combined with recklessness. Few stories of managerial genius equal that of McGraw's 1921 pennant drive. In early September, the Giants were trailing the league-leading Pirates by seven and a half games. The team was sloppy afield and limp at the plate. The Pirates breezed into New York with plenty of zing, confident that the NL flag would soon fly over Forbes Field.

Before the double-header for that day started, McGraw called his Giants into session and threw the book at them. At first, he just got mad, burning mad, and the words bounced off the rafters and filled up the room and ate into the hearts of the players like lye. He called them yellow quitters and worse; he lashed them with profanity; he degraded

and humiliated them; he told them they deserved their lickings and said he hoped they'd get worse.

And then, when they were cringing and beaten, he suddenly stopped. His voice became quiet and clear and those who were there that day said his words brought tears and touched the stoniest of hearts. There was sadness in his tone as he recalled Giant history of the past, 20 years of it, as he told them of victories won against terrible odds, of the pride and dignity of men who refused to be beaten. He pleaded for the team and himself with the voice of an angel. He really had it that day.

The Giants he finally unleashed on the Pirates went on the field as though possessed. They pounced on the Pittsburgh club like an army with banners and won the first game. They started the second game in the same fashion, but by the last of the seventh the stunned Pirates had recovered and unleashed their terrific power to go ahead by one run. The Giants loaded the bases in the last of the eighth and George Kelly came to bat. Babe Adams, hurling for the Bucs, tried to fool Kelly on curves and got behind three balls and no strikes. One more ball would force in the tying run. It was then McGraw rose to his heights. He signaled Kelly to hit the next pitch!

"What!" exclaimed Casey Stengel, who was sitting beside McGraw on the bench. "What the hell!"

"Shut up!" McGraw growled.

Kelly stepped out of the box and glanced at the dugout again, as though he hadn't seen the sign or couldn't believe it. He probably couldn't believe it.

McGraw gave him the "hit" sign again. Kelly dug in. Adams threw a fast ball right down the middle. Kelly swung away and parked it into the stands for a grand-slam homer. Everyone went wild. McGraw, cold as ice, turned to Stengel and said, "I knew Adams would throw it in there. And I know what Kelly can do with a fast ball down the alley. I don't only want to win this game. I want to crush these guys."

The Giants swept that series. The Pirates faltered, then buckled, and the New Yorkers went on to take the pennant.

But after that magnificent sweep of the doubleheader, did McGraw rush into the Giant locker room and fall on his charges with praise and sentiment? He did not. He walked in, a stern and commanding figure, looked the players over carefully, and snarled, "You fellows have a chance yet, if my brain holds out."

That was McGraw. He may have felt proud and grateful, but he also knew that the only way to keep his Giants storming ahead was to dig the spurs into them and never let up.

All his life, McGraw firmly believed he never asked any ballplayer to do what he couldn't have done in the prime of his playing days. It often annoyed or saddened him when he discovered that young ballplayers he

liked were not acquainted with the fact that their fat-encased manager had once been trim Johnny McGraw, a great ballplayer.

Johnny McGraw was a ballplayer, all right. In the 1890's, when the fans rode to the parks in horse-drawn buses, the McGraw kid was one of the most talked-about players of the day. He was a speedy, scrappy dynamo, the Eddie Stanky of his time. He was one of the first of the "little men" in baseball, which was then a game played chiefly by brawny, muscular giants. Johnny McGraw, standing five feet, six and a half inches, weighing 121 pounds, was the terror of the old American Association and, later on, the National League. From 1891 to 1899, he was the brain and sparkplug of the championship Baltimore Orioles, considered by some to be the greatest ball club of all time.

"When I played the game," McGraw once remarked proudly, "a ball park was a rough, uncultivated lot, a grandstand was a jumble of rickety slats, and a club pay-roll looked like the wage list of a logging camp."

It was a long-ago and far-away time. Most of the fathers of our present-day stars had not yet been born when Johnny McGraw became a professional ballplayer. At 17, years before the Spanish-American War, the itinerant young ballplayer, John McGraw, was playing exhibition games in Havana, Cuba. He toured with ball clubs through the South and Middle West when baseball was still in swaddling clothes.

John J. McGraw, the son of a farmhand and section-gang worker, was born in Truxton, about 18 miles south of Syracuse, New York, in 1873, the year Ulysses S. Grant began his second term as President of the United States. John was the oldest of four children. Their mother died when he was 12 and the family broke up, the father pushing the kids off on various relatives. He got his son John a job as a candy butcher on the old Elmira, Cortland, and Northern Railroad.

As a boy, McGraw was fresh and argumentative, often annoying passengers with his didactic opinions about baseball. One of these rhubarbs was over whether or not a baseball could be made to curve in flight. Passengers made bets and, at the next stop, the 15-year-old McGraw got off the train to prove his point. He put stakes in the ground 20 feet apart in a straight line.

"I'll start the ball from the left side of the stake at my end," he explained, "make it pass to the right of the middle stake and it will be caught on the left side of the stake at the other end."

He did, and collected a share of the bets made.

Whenever Johnny could sneak away from his train job, he played ball with a school team in Truxton. He had dreams of becoming a great pitcher. His father, as strong-willed as the son, considered baseball a waste of time. It led to conflict, beatings, ill-will between the two. The elder McGraw often whaled the daylights out of his son when he caught him neglecting his job to play ball.

It is fascinating, in a psychiatric sense, that the two most stormy, pugnacious, successful figures in baseball history, Ty Cobb and John J. McGraw, both defied their fathers to become ballplayers. But how could the poor, work-ridden McGraw senior know that the boy he lectured and thrashed would some day, because of this game of baseball, meet and talk to the King of England, travel the whole world, make and lose fortunes, become a fabulous, international figure?

McGraw's father was responsible for forcing Johnny to teach himself to "place hit" a baseball. A left-handed hitter, Johnny naturally drove the ball to the right. A school house stood at the end of the lot in right field and young McGraw broke more than one window in it, for which his dad had to pay. The lickings he took set his nimble brain to working.

"Experimenting and practicing," he later said, "I found that by changing the position of my feet and by using a chop swing, I could poke the ball into left field, fooling the other team and saving myself a whaling. Learning that as a kid," he would add, "was responsible for my batting record in the major leagues."

At 16, McGraw joined the Truxton Grays, a semi-pro hometown team. He went from there to East Homer, then to the Olean club in the Iron and Oil League, where he was turned into a third-baseman. He was to stay in that spot, and shortstop, for the rest of his playing days. McGraw then began skipping to many teams, going on exhibition tours, always on the lookout for a way to better himself. He had a very shrewd ability to get more money than most ballplayers were then being paid.

By 1891, when he was not quite 19, the fire-eating ballplayer had gained such a reputation that 29 ball clubs were after his services. He took an offer from the Cedar Rapids club in Iowa at \$125 per month. It created quite a furor among other owners of ball teams, because McGraw had made tentative deals with all of them. The owner of one club had the law out looking for McGraw, threatening to drag him into court for his failure to keep a promise that he would play for them.

This threatened law suit was the first of a pattern. Mac was to see the inside of many courtrooms as the years rolled on. No manager in baseball spent so much time peering up at a judge as did John McGraw. He began creating enemies before he was out of his 'teens. Down through the years, his legal brawls made headlines. There were nasty scandals, humorous and tragic incidents. For every individual he charmed, hundreds hated him.

Strangely enough, McGraw seemed to feel more guilt about his conduct as an adolescent than he did as an adult. As a man, he never apologized for his escapades, but he seemed to feel that he shouldn't be held responsible for the scrapes he got into as a youth and the promises he broke in order to get ahead as a ballplayer.

"I was really just a small boy a long way from home," he once told a reporter. "I didn't know exactly what to do. I had no older man to advise me. As long as I had to decide these things all alone, I did the best I could."

McGraw's best was always pretty wonderful for McGraw. Even as a kid, he was as shrewd in baseball matters as you can possibly get. He knew how to threaten and bargain. And you have to admire the way he was as a youngster, with guts, a good brain, and the ability to use both. He had to learn to scratch and claw and slug. Those qualities stayed with him all his life and made him great.

There was a sentimental streak as wide as a base-path in McGraw, too. He loved those old ball clubs for which he had played. The Polo Grounds was always well stocked with old players who held down minor jobs as gate-keepers and groundsmen simply because they once played with McGraw. Sight unseen, he once signed a pitcher named Otis Crandall because the youngster hailed from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, the last minor-league club for which McGraw played. McGraw's sentimentality paid off on that deal. Crandall developed into a classy hurler.

Manager Billie Barnie and the Orioles were shocked and tickled at the sight of the skinny kid with fierce, dark, deep-set eyes who turned up late in the season of 1891. Barney had signed him on a tout from Bill Gleason, famed shortstop of the St. Louis Browns.

"Gleason tells me you think you're about as good as they come," Manager Barnie said. "How can a shrimp like you play ball?"

"Let me in there," McGraw sparked. "I'm tougher than I look."

That first day, Johnny McGraw took a seat on the end of the bench. A large, playful character sitting next to him gave the young Irishman the hip, knocking him off the bench into the dirt. He regretted that play. McGraw flew at him, screaming like a maniac, his fists beating a tattoo against the big player's face. It took several Orioles to tear him loose from their battered teammate. After that, they left him alone. He was "in." But from then on, for 42 years, McGraw never took the end seat on a bench.

The Orioles were not a very sharp ball club when McGraw joined them. It wasn't until the following year, when Ned Hanlon became manager and the Baltimore franchise was incorporated into the National League, that they began to catch fire. It was Foxy Ned Hanlon who put together that legendary Baltimore powerhouse that won pennants year after year. McGraw's two closest friends on that Oriole team were Wilbert Robinson and Hughie Jennings. All three later became managers.

In his good-natured, frolicsome way, Jennings was as ambitious and eager to get ahead in life as Johnny McGraw. They roomed together, talked and studied baseball, got out early in the mornings and practiced

hitting and fielding before the other players reported to the field. They even decided they needed to be educated, that it would help them in baseball and in the world outside the game.

McGraw made up his mind to take courses at St. Bonaventure College, St. Bonaventure, N. Y., between baseball seasons. Jennings fell in with the idea. But their salaries then were only \$1,400 a year, not nearly enough to keep them going and pay for tuition. Johnny dreamed up the idea of teaching baseball at the school in return for their tuition. Their offer was accepted and today there is a McGraw-Jennings Field at St. Bonaventure, in honor of two ballplayers who wanted to learn and grow.

McGraw played third base on the championship 1894 Oriole team. Jennings was at short, Brouthers at first, Reitz at second. In the outfield were Steve Brodie, Joe Kelly, and that other "shrimp" who reached Baseball's Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, Wee Willie Keeler. Behind the plate was the massive Wilbert Robinson, who was later to manage the Dodgers for so many years and feud so bitterly with his old friend, McGraw. The pitchers were headed by the immortal Fred Clarkson, McMahon, Esper, and Pond.

The feats of these Orioles have become legend. Their skill, their flaming courage, their team spirit has never been surpassed. Close companions of McGraw often said that he had more love for this team than even the greatest of his Giant aggregations. He always held them up as the team that did the most to revolutionize baseball. It was a team of youth, speed, quick thinking, and guts. McGraw was the ringleader.

At New Orleans, in '94, McGraw worked out the "inside plays" that brought the Orioles three straight championships. Before Johnny McGraw, the bunt was used merely as a sacrifice to advance a runner. McGraw taught the Orioles how to use the bunt as a "surprise" that would land them safely on first. With the "hit 'em where they ain't" genius, Wee Willie Keeler, he devised the now standard hit-and-run play.

McGraw was the lead-off man and Keeler followed him. A man reaching first, playing the "old style," would either wait for a hit, try to steal, or hope to advance on a sacrifice. McGraw and Keeler changed all that. Mac would start down as if to steal, feinting the infielder toward second, and Keeler would hit through the hole that had been vacated. If the ball was so bad that Keeler couldn't hit it, McGraw would keep going. If Keeler hit safely, McGraw would reach third.

It is not generally known, but Johnny McGraw was one of the fastest runners in baseball. He stole as many as 77 bases in one season with the Orioles. Between his stealing, the surprise bunts, the hit-and-run, and the spark of the team, the Orioles completely befuddled the "old-fashioned" players of the other teams in the league.

"It's just a bunch of trick stuff those kids pull," said John Montgomery Ward, then manager of the Giants. "It's just tricks and luck and they won't last."

Ward changed his mind late in the season when the hit-and-run Orioles took 24 out of 25 games, winning 18 straight! McGraw was the terror of the umpire as well as rival players, shouting at him in a belligerent manner and pulling off illegal stunts so slickly that the custodian in blue seldom saw them.

In those days, the game had only one umpire. The way McGraw took advantage of that fact earned him the reputation of creating the multiple ump system. Sometimes, in a crisis, with the umpire following the flight of the ball, McGraw would ignore second base and cut directly from first to third. The rival players would yell bloody murder, but Muggsy would insist, in a louder tone, upon the rule that the umpire could make a decision only on what he had actually seen, not on hearsay.

McGraw had a pocketful of tricks. With a runner on third, ready to take off for home the moment a fly ball was caught, McGraw would surreptitiously hook his finger in the player's belt. He would hold on just long enough to insure the runner being caught at the plate. He was so cute about it that the umpire seldom caught him in the act. A Louisville player once fixed McGraw by loosening his belt. He then romped for home, leaving the enraged and foolish-looking third-baseman holding a strap in his hands.

During McGraw's first year at Baltimore, he was nicknamed "Muggsy." He deserved the tag. He also despised it. It was given to him by a newspaperman who implied that Johnny McGraw, the wasp of the Orioles, was related to a Baltimore ward-heeler known as Muggsy McGraw. The politico was an uncouth, rough-and-ready, somewhat shady character. The ballplayer, who was then attending college in his off-time and striving to become a gentleman off the field, hated being linked to the ward-heeler.

Always after that, whenever anyone wanted to taunt John McGraw, the name "Muggsy" was trotted out and put to use. At the sound of it, McGraw would immediately assume the role of a "mug," flying into a fierce rage. Some of his friends, not familiar with baseball, often thought the term "Muggsy" was one of endearment and came dangerously close to winding up on the floor.

Not even Branch Rickey could carry on so many feuds at one time as John J. McGraw. How he managed to stay in baseball, with so many powerful sport figures out to get him, is something of a miracle. McGraw did not limit his antagonisms to rival club owners and managers, but carried on word-and-fist battles with players, umpires, fans, celebrities in other fields, unknowns, and big shots. A few of his opponents in these classic feuds were Ban Johnson, Clark Griffith, Harry Pulliam,

John K. Tener, Wilbert Robinson, Ty Cobb, Barney Dreyfuss, and all the umpires in the National League, headed by Bill Klem.

The quarrel with Ban Johnson, American League president, was one of the most enduring and bitter. In 1900, when Baltimore was dropped from the National League, McGraw was sold to St. Louis. He was offered the highest salary then paid to a major-league player, \$9,500. He accepted it only on condition that he could become a free agent at the end of the season. There was a terrific war then in progress between the newly formed American League, headed by Ban Johnson, and the old, established National League. Smart cookie McGraw wanted to be free to jump either way, in whatever direction would benefit John J. McGraw.

In 1901, Johnson talked McGraw into taking over as the manager of the Baltimore Orioles, which had been picked up by the American League. McGraw agreed. He spent most of 1901 fighting with Johnson, as bellicose a boy as John J. himself.

"I couldn't get along with Johnson," was McGraw's version. "I wanted a successful team and all Johnson thought about was making the American League pay off. He made unfair and harsh rulings against me and my players. He suspended me frequently. I knew he was angling for a club in New York and would drop us from the league like a hot potato the first chance he got."

At the start of the 1902 season, McGraw beat Johnson to the punch by getting an unconditional release from the stockholders of the Baltimore Orioles. On July 7, 1902, the baseball world was stunned to hear that he had accepted an offer to manage the New York Giants. Ban's bull-like bellows of rage echoed up and down both leagues. He accused McGraw of running out on the Baltimore club, of betraying a promise to stay in the American League, of being a crook and an ingrate. McGraw denied the charges in his usual style, much of his language being unprintable.

And so, under a storm cloud of insults and protests, the 29-year-old McGraw arrived at the Polo Grounds. His salary for that year was to be \$11,000 and he had stubbornly stipulated that he was to have absolute, unchallenged control of the Giants. Owner Freedman had agreed to this, figuring he could handle the young man and run things the way he saw fit. He didn't know McGraw.

The new manager began tangling with the boss from the moment his hat was on the rack. He picked up the Giant roster and crossed out nine names.

"We get rid of these fellows," he said.

"No, you don't," Freedman came back. "They cost me a lot of money."

"They won't play on my ball club," McGraw snapped. "And I want you to get me Billy Gilbert, Sam Mertes, George Davis."

"Not Davis!" Freedman shouted. "I have no use for him!"

"He's a great ballplayer!" McGraw yelled back, drowning out the owner's protests. "You're going to get him for me and pay him \$6,500 a year. I'm going to run this club the way I see fit! Nobody's going to stop me!"

Nobody ever did stop him. McGraw brought Iron Man Joe McGinnity, Roger Bresnahan, Dan McGann, and Jack Cronin from the Orioles. He signed four or five other players he liked and began to build his Giants. He took them from the cellar in 1902 to second place in 1903. In 1904, he brought the Giants their first pennant.

"The only popularity I know," McGraw once remarked, "is to win."

He carried the entire responsibility for the team on his broadening shoulders. His outward behavior was wild and boyish, but his decisions about his ball team were mature. He hired men he despised because he thought they had what it took to be a Giant. No matter how deep an affection McGraw had for a player, if he didn't measure up, the manager released him quickly.

John T. Brush, who is credited with organizing the American-National League World Series, bought the Giants in 1903. He was a hearty, outspoken man, and he and McGraw hit it off immediately. He gave the young manager *carte blanche* and McGraw made him barrels of money. The Giants became the biggest draw in the league and the world champions in 1905.

The wham-bang style of those early-day Giants, their cocky, aggressive manners on the diamond, brought the wrath of fans in rival towns down around their ears. McGraw instigated this and loved it. He had a large amount of Barnum in him. He was wise enough to realize that hate is as strong an attraction as love and that baseball bugs would lay it on the line in the hope of seeing the Giants trounced and humiliated.

Cops were called in Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and Chicago to keep the Giants from being mobbed on their way to the ball park. McGraw worked out new ways to bring on the ire of fans. He would cart his players to the park, not in an ordinary bus, but in gilded carriages with banners proclaiming them World Champions. They were belted with eggs and stale fruit, assaulted and defiled, but the fans followed them right through the gate.

In 1906, a string of injuries robbed the Giants of the pennant. The following year, McGraw again shocked the wise birds of baseball by tying the can on the players that had brought the Giants their championship. With one whack, he released over half the team. Established stars were traded for young, untried players.

"McGraw is plumb crazy," a sportswriter remarked when he learned of the deal. "He's so swell-headed he thinks he doesn't need players to win. He thinks all he has to have is McGraw."

"Maybe so," another scribe answered. "There are always nine McGraws on the field and one on the bench. But it wouldn't surprise me if the Giants grabbed another pennant pretty soon."

They almost did in 1908. In late September, they were hurtling down the stretch in a tie with the rip-snorting Cubs of Tinker to Evers to Chance fame. It was the "play that made history" that robbed the green McGraw kids of the flag, the famous incident when Fred Merkle failed to touch second.

It was the last half of the ninth at the Polo Grounds, with the score tied. Harry McCormick was on third and Merkle was on first. Al Bridwell came to bat with the pennant at stake. He drove the first pitch to center field for a base hit. McCormick came home with the "winning run." Merkle stopped between first and second and ran for the clubhouse.

The fans poured out on to the field. Many of the Giant and Chicago players ran for the clubhouse. Johnny Evers, standing on second, kept screaming for the ball. It was finally relayed to him. He touched the bag and claimed that Merkle should be declared out, making the third out and nullifying the run. The umpires refused to make a decision until the next day, when they called the game a tie.

At the end of the season, the Cubs and Giants were still all even. They played out the "Merkle game" and, with Christy Mathewson pitching, the Giants lost the game and the pennant. There are hundreds of versions of this game and that famed "bonehead play" but the interesting thing is the reaction of John Joseph McGraw. The Giant fans were yelling for Merkle's scalp. They wanted him chastised. Some felt he should be given the gate.

"I don't blame Merkle," McGraw said at the close of the season. "He did what he had seen older ballplayers do many times. He's a fine player and he's going to be even better next year. I intend not only to keep him, but give him a raise."

And that is what McGraw did. If he had made the same error in judgment himself, he probably would have jumped off the nearest bridge. Like a good general, John McGraw could always forgive and forget an error his players made as long as it did not involve disobeying an order. He showed the same rare tolerance toward Fred Snodgrass, who muffed an easy fly ball against the Red Sox, costing the Giants the 1912 World Series. He also boosted Snodgrass' salary the next year.

The Giants won the pennant for three straight years, starting in 1911. In 30 years, McGraw masterminded his team to a pennant on an average of once every three years. Starting in 1921, the players from the Polo Grounds won four straight, which wasn't equalled until McCarthy's Yanks went on a rampage. And McGraw never had a "Murderer's Row" to run up his scores.

McGraw's 1911 team has been called the speediest baseball club in history. If any present-day clubs take exception to this, they should know that the Giants stole more bases that year than all the teams in the league put together had stolen the previous year. The reporters covering a Western trip of the Giants that season had wonderful copy to send back. The Giants swiped so many bases, ran the paths in such wild, sliding, ripping style, that they literally tore their uniforms to rags. McGraw gleefully wired to New York for more uniforms.

"The Giants aren't out to win the pennant," Bozeman Bulger reported from Chicago. "They are out to steal it. Josh Devore slid into second with such ferocity today that his pants were completely ripped off, leaving only a few rags hanging to a belt. He had to be escorted from the field half-naked."

The Giants rolled on, quarrelsome, boastful, and unbeatable. The newspapers and fans had, by this time, made McGraw a national figure, holding him up as a mixture of genius and ogre. He was a familiar figure along Broadway and at the racetrack, a swaggering, party-loving man with a talent for trouble. He had been married, the year he came to the Giants, to Mary Blanche Sindall, the socially prominent daughter of a Baltimore contractor. It remained a happy marriage, in spite of the escapades of Mrs. McGraw's fast-moving, stormy, headline-making husband.

In 1912, although his Giants lost the World Series, John Joseph McGraw was the big man of baseball. He decided to cash in on his fame by going on a vaudeville tour for a neat \$3,000 per week. He opened at Hammerstein's Theater in New York and went on to the Palace in Chicago. He strutted across the country, happy behind the footlights, enjoying the "act" of building up McGraw. The following year, with still another pennant in his pocket, he and Charles Comiskey set off on a world tour with the Giants and White Sox.

At the close of the World Series that year, when the A's again ripped the Giants and took the world championship, a long smoldering quarrel between McGraw and his old Oriole pal, Wilbert Robinson, broke into the open. Robby, who had been a fine Giant pitching coach, quit McGraw and went across the river to Brooklyn. The hatred between the two men became as intense as their friendship had once been. This, as old-time baseball fans know, was the beginning of the fierce long-standing Brooklyn-Giant rivalry.

McGraw came back from his first world tour riding the crest of the wave. He was getting beefy now, a puffy, wide-chested, broad-seated man with a bulbous nose and challenging, intelligent, know-it-all eyes. He had been to the Orient. He had spread the word about baseball all over the world, to Egypt, France, the Philippines. He had met and chatted with the King of England. The skinny, fire-eating kid from

Truxton no longer existed. He was now a figure of importance, sought after, quoted, denounced, and praised. He was a big, unattractive, bellicose character with the best brain in baseball.

But even the mighty can stumble and take nose dives. The high-handed, despotic, generous, brilliant "Little Napoleon" cursed and drove and pleaded with his 1914 Giants as they fought for still another National League flag. But the inspired Boston Braves were too much for the McGraw men, who stumbled and then crumpled under the heat of the Braves' fire.

Still heralded as the greatest manager in baseball, McGraw fumed on the bench through 1915 and into 1916. The latter year, he rose to unequalled heights of leadership and then fell into the dust of despair. In early September, worked into a frenzy by McGraw and aided by the dazzling pitching of Ferdie Schupp, Perritt, Benton, and Sallee, the Giants won 26 games in a row! The Giant infield, composed of Buck Herzog, Art Fletcher, Walter Holke, and Henry Zimmerman, played matchless baseball.

"The finest Giant team in history!"

"An inspired and wonderful winning streak!"

"McGraw still has it—he's the game's greatest pilot."

That's the way the sportswriters heaped praise on the rallying Giants and their manager. But, by the close of the season, the Giants had been nosed out of the race and McGraw was a snarling, embittered man. During a game against Brooklyn, led by his old rival, Wilbert Robinson, McGraw left the bench in disgust. He implied to the sportswriters that his players were quitters. He even hinted that they had thrown the game.

It was an unjust accusation. The players felt hurt and abandoned. It became a scandal and almost drew an investigation.

Rumors flew around town that McGraw was through, that he could no longer control himself or his team. Perhaps, in McGraw's eyes, the Giants were letting him down. They were not Orioles—they were human. They did not, as the Orioles would have done, go on fighting even when the cause looked hopeless. As Robby's team was licking the Giants that day, perhaps McGraw was thinking of his playing days with Baltimore, of old Robby grinding a smashed finger into the dust to stop the bleeding and finishing the game behind the plate.

But John McGraw was a country mile from writing *finis* to his career. In 1917, he signed a contract for \$40,000 a year and a share of the profits. It was to be a five-year deal. "He is not the fire-eater of old," a newspaper account of the day said. "He has grown gray and tolerant—or at least *more* tolerant."

McGraw had grown more gray, but surely not more tolerant. He came out for the 1917 season like a lion released from a cage. He stewed

up a huge cauldron of fuss and trouble and smashed through to still another National League pennant. He had, although few would have believed it at the start of the season, 15 more years ahead of him as a big-league manager. He was then 44 years old. He was considered one of the "old men" of baseball.

The furious little manager began the season by putting the biff and bam on umpire Bill Byron after a game in Cincinnati. It was a bloody battle, which Frank Graham reports at great length in his superlative book "McGraw of the Giants." The fight made newspaper headlines for weeks, due to McGraw's irrational statements and retractions.

The fight began on a runway that led to the clubhouse. McGraw edged alongside a Cincinnati player who was berating umpire Byron and tossed in a few inflammatory words. Byron wheeled around and yelled at McGraw, saying that the manager had been chased out of Baltimore.

"Nobody chased me out of Baltimore!" McGraw screamed. "I'd like to hear you say that again!"

"They ran you out!" Byron came back.

Wham! McGraw unleashed a punch that split Byron's lip. The umpire bounced off the runway wall and McGraw was on him again, throwing punches like a kid trying to make the grade in the Golden Gloves. Cops and players finally interceded and pulled the still flailing McGraw away from Byron. A few days later, John K. Tener, then president of the National League, slapped a \$500 fine and a 16-day suspension on McGraw.

Never one to take anything lying down, McGraw blew sky high. In an interview with Sid Mercer, a veteran New York sportswriter and then a friend of his, McGraw went on the warpath. He accused Tener of showing favoritism. He heaped abuse on the umpires of the National League and the way Tener handled them. It was a tirade that Mercer knew would cause tremendous repercussions if it were printed.

Sid, a good newspaper man, was also a fair one. He gave McGraw every chance to cool off and back down from his statements. He even showed McGraw the story he had written and offered to kill it. McGraw not only okayed it, but insisted that it be given to all the other reporters.

When the story broke across the country, it created the furor Mercer had expected. The Giants were on the road, but McGraw was called to New York by Tener to account for his actions. Harry Hempstead, then president of the Giants, met McGraw, wringing his hands and moaning. The manager finally signed a statement to Tener that accused the baseball writers of "inventing" the words he had spoken. In short, he called them all liars.

The mess dragged on. The reporters didn't take the rap casually. They demanded an investigation to prove that McGraw had lied. It was finally

held, with Tener appointing a lawyer to conduct the hearings and to submit his findings in the case. Mercer, reluctantly, but with his own honor at stake, went on the stand. His testimony must have made McGraw feel very sick. Mac squirmed and angrily tried to make out a case for himself. When Tener got the report of the "trial," he was certain it was McGraw who had lied and he tagged him with still another fine, a cool \$1,000.

"It cost Mac \$500 for fighting and \$1,000 for talking about it," a baseball writer said, as Graham reports in his book.

McGraw also lost many good friends among the baseball writers, including Sid Mercer, who never spoke to him after that and quit covering the Giants.

If the affair bothered McGraw—and it must have cut very deeply—he didn't show it. He went right on snapping and raving. He charged ahead in the race for the National League pennant. He won the flag with practically the same team he had walked away from in disgust that day a year before in Brooklyn. The World Series that year went to six games and the Giants were beaten by the White Sox because of another of those last inning "bonehead plays." This time the hapless culprit was Heinie Zimmerman. With nobody covering home plate, Heinie was forced to chase Eddie Collins of the Sox across the dish with the winning run.

Again, McGraw did not take out his rage on the player. He vented his fury on the White Sox and manager Clarence Rowland, swearing at Rowland and refusing to shake hands with him after the final game. In defeat, John McGraw was seldom an example for the youth of the country. He was a colossal sorehead as a loser, a rotten sportsman. The best you can say is that McGraw always expressed his feelings fully, honestly, and profanely.

The lavish, generous parties McGraw tossed when he won are still remembered as keenly as his behavior when he lost. It is not difficult to understand why McGraw reacted so violently whenever his ball club was beaten. It was not the Giants who had been defeated—it was McGraw. The rage he took out on his rivals was actually directed at himself.

"I myself, am heaven and hell," holds true for John McGraw, the lone wolf, the supreme egoist with the creative baseball brain. It began at 12, after the death of his mother, when he defied his father to stand on his own. Nothing changed inside him, as a boy or a man, after that.

For three years, from 1918 through 1920, under the shadow of World War I, the Giants finished in second place. They were always the team to beat and McGraw provided a three-ring circus on and off the field. In 1919, he became a part owner of the ball club along with Charles Stoneham and Francis X. McQuade. That same year, indulging his passion for horse racing, he bought an interest in a racetrack in Havana.

He was living high, wide, and handsome. In 1920, his large, belligerent face was plastered all over the newspapers as he was dragged into court for using his fists too freely in the Lambs Club and in front of his home.

William Boyd, a prominent actor of the time, was one of John's opponents in the Lambs Club slugfest. They began swinging at each other when Boyd objected to McGraw's swearing in front of some scrub-women who happened to be nearby. Later that night, McGraw got into another brawl with John C. Slavin, a musical-comedy star. The fight took place in front of McGraw's apartment house and Slavin wound up in a hospital.

The members of the Lambs Club, highly indignant, expelled McGraw from the club. He was kept out for three years. The District Attorney swung into action and McGraw was tried in a district court and acquitted. In the meantime, he had beaten the daylights out of still another actor who had visited him to talk about what had happened at the Lambs Club! It was an involved and messy business which dragged on for months. John McGraw was not what you'd call a peaceful citizen.

The doughty manager opened the 1921 season by brawling with Clark Griffith and his ancient enemy, Ban Johnson. He had hired his old pal, Hughie Jennings, as head coach. Together, they planned to make life miserable for the other clubs in the league. They did just that. For four glorious, exciting, tumultuous years the Giants trampled on their enemies with great abandon, winning four pennants and two world championships. The Era of McGraw had returned. The beefy, glowing, 48-year-old managerial wonder romped and raved like a kid as his team pushed the hated Yankees into the dust two years in a row to become world champions.

McGraw deserves complete credit for those triumphs. His brains beat a team that was, on paper, far superior. He had taken, in 1921, an unnerved, slumping, disheartened collection of ballplayers and turned them into champions. He had faced the slugging Yanks headed by the blasting Ruth, and two years in a row proved to the world of baseball that a manager is still the most important figure on a ball club, and that John J. McGraw was as invincible as of old.

The years from 1921 to 1924 in baseball belong to McGraw. He milked them for all they were worth. He had the time of his life, celebrating his victories like a maharaja. There were parties, wild and wonderful, in the old Waldorf Hotel—champagne, speeches, back-slapping, and rejoicing. The McGraws took trips abroad and the fine, riotous life was continued in London and Paris. McGraw was as high and happy in victory as he was mean and miserable in defeat.

The second world tour with the White Sox, at the close of the 1924 season, was a washout financially. But McGraw and his gang had a rollicking good time. The welcome of warm and admiring throngs, the

audiences with royalty and heads of state put the old fire-eater in a warm and mellow mood. He loved pomp and ceremony almost as much as rousing rows with hard-headed, tough umpires and long-standing enemies. For years afterward, McGraw loved to tell stories about his personal triumph on the Continent and the reaction of the lowly and the great ones to our national game.

One of the more amusing of these incidents happened during an exhibition game outside London. A husky Giant batter belted a ball far over the head of a White Sox centerfielder. A member of the English nobility, sitting with McGraw, tapped the manager on the shoulder and said, "Ah, I say, too bad, too bad!"

"What do you mean, too bad?" McGraw demanded.

"Out of bounds, dear fellow, out of bounds!" the Englishman clucked.

Always after these tours of triumph, or maybe because of them, evil days would fall on McGraw. He got sick at the start of the 1925 season. The Giants began to roll downhill. The Pirates walloped them late in the season to clinch the pennant. The only bright spot that year was the appearance of a husky youngster from Louisiana, a gawky kid carrying a paper-backed suitcase. "Mr. McGraw," the boy said, shaking in the presence of the great manager, "I'm Melvin Ott."

In a sudden unpredictable move which was so typical of McGraw, the manager gave the boy a uniform and made him a Giant. It was Ott who was to become the last of McGraw's great stars, to worship him as few men ever have, and continue to keep the name of McGraw alive and shining thing long after McGraw passed from the baseball scene. The year McGraw gained this new, young, adoring friend, he lost an old one. Christy Mathewson died. A part of McGraw went with his first star and great pitcher. He had loved Matty very much and it was a loss from which he never really recovered.

Into the ears of Mel Ott, McGraw poured all the wisdom he had gained down through the years. The growth of Ott as a slugger and outfielder is a Horatio Alger story which has been told many times. Ott, in his prime, was a monument to the genius of John McGraw.

"He helped everyone," Ott said. "Even those he disliked. He was a fine, decent man and the greatest thing that ever happened to me was knowing him. He was also the greatest manager baseball has ever known. Nobody could inspire players as he could, give them such a will to win."

It is somewhat sad that Mel Ott, Bill Terry, Carl Hubbell, the last of the long string of great ballplayers, developed by McGraw, never saw him at his height, during the glory of his pennant-winning streaks. In 1926, the first full year that Ott wore a Giant uniform, the Giants sunk to fifth place. It was the first time in a decade they had failed to finish in the first division.

The year was marred by Frankie Frisch taking off in mid-season.

Frankie's quitting the Giants was brought on by the constant, merciless riding of McGraw. As captain of the team for two seasons, Frisch had borne the brunt of McGraw's cruel tongue-lashings as the Giants slipped down the ladder of the league. Frisch, who was far from being a thin-skinned player, took it until it became unbearable and then packed his grips one night in St. Louis and left in a huff for New York.

McGraw traded Frisch and pitcher Jimmy Ring for the renowned Rogers Hornsby who was to act as a combination player, captain, and assistant manager. That didn't work out, either. Nothing Rog did seemed to please McGraw, who left him in charge of the team late in the season. It was the first time McGraw had turned over his Giants to anyone. It was the beginning of the end. The old firehorse had a few more spurts of fury left in him, but he was rapidly running down, dogged by ill-health, inner-club wrangling and rhubarbs with the National League's president, John Heydler.

In 1928, McGraw shook himself like a punchy fighter, cleared his head, and charged back into battle again. He pushed his Giants in and out of first place. He pushed them in with all the shrewd managerial tricks of old. He pushed them out again by flying into such uncontrollable temper tantrums that the players became rattled, frightened, and booted ball games. The Giants finished in second place, two games behind the Cards, after a row in late September in which McGraw accused umpire Bill Klem and Heydler of robbing them of the pennant.

The Giants finished third in 1929 and 1930, and fought gamely to overtake the Cardinals again in 1931. They were hopelessly out-classed and McGraw suffered through moods of helpless rage and frustration and melancholy. But he went right on throwing his weight around, bullying umpires, shouting at his old nemesis, Bill Klem, as though it were 1907 again and he still had enough strength in his body to flatten The Old Arbitrator with one blow.

At 59, John McGraw was sick in body and mind, but he was still raring and furious. He was kicked off the field in St. Louis one afternoon after threatening to annihilate an umpire. Heydler wearily fined him \$150 and probably wondered, helplessly, if the old demon would ever die down. He never did.

McGraw lay in wait for Heydler outside the ball park the next day and, in front of an amazed crowd of fans and players and reporters, screamed insults at the bewildered, embarrassed president of the league. His wrath became so terrifying that those gathered feared he would have a stroke. He even wheeled on the crowd and cursed them furiously for listening!

How many gathered there that day realized that McGraw was reviling himself? His team had lost, the fluttering pennant had eluded him, and he knew he was too old and tired and used-up ever to be able to hit

the glory trail of a comeback again. The fire in the stove had died down to mere coals of glowing resentment at the frightening realization that McGraw of the Giants was through.

He didn't even enter the ball park that day late in 1931. He went back to his hotel, sat alone in his room, a sick, weary man, heavy head hanging to one side, alone and pitiful like some great, mortally wounded animal.

"The only popularity I know," he had once said, "is to win." He could no longer win.

Matty was gone. So was Ross Youngs and Kid Gleason and Joe Kelly and Ned Hanlon. Who was around who had seen the Orioles of 1894? Who remembered the Giants of 1905 and the way Johnny McGraw, their slim, young, furious manager, had been then? Did they remember who had given baseball the hit-and-run, the pinch-hitter? They never wrote about that any more. . . .

He was The Old Man. He could no longer handle his players. He could now inspire only fear or humor. Some of them even dared talk back to him.

Early in June of 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt was campaigning for President and the Giants were in last place when the news of John J. McGraw's retirement was splashed across the front pages of newspapers all over the country. Baseball fans who had cast their first vote for Grover Cleveland and followed Muggsy McGraw's blazing career for three decades felt a choking sensation in their throats. They felt it whether they had loved him or hated him. They knew he had been worthy of both.

Bill Terry took over the Giants. McGraw puttered around in an office on 42nd Street, trying to conduct himself like a staid and disinterested executive. It fooled no one. He had few visitors. The sight of him was too sad. He never looked at home anywhere except on the bench, or on the playing field, or near a place where Giant uniforms were being worn, victories being celebrated.

He made his last fighting appearance in 1933 as the manager of the National League All-Star team, opposing Manager Connie Mack of the American League. Babe Ruth, one of the "big men" John McGraw once said he had driven out of baseball, broke up the ball game with a home run. McGraw shook hands with Connie Mack after the game. He had, in the very end, learned how to lose graciously. But it wasn't a Giant team he was master-minding that day.

From high in the stands in Washington, he watched the Giants, under his protégé, Bill Terry, sweep the Senators off their feet in the 1933 World Series. But they no longer seemed to be Giants, these sparkling players out of the range of his voice and the touch of his strategy.

Years like that one might have dragged on, but the end came quickly and kindly. Just 19 months after John J. McGraw had resigned as manager of the New York Giants, on February 25, 1934, he died in a hospital in New Rochelle, New York.

There is no simple way to sum up the career of a man like John J. McGraw, the fabulous, furious leader of the New York Giants, the pioneer and genius in the field of managing baseball players. He was too big and important to the game of baseball to attempt to eulogize by tossing off a final, pat phrase.

One day in the early 1900's, a ballplayer who had left the Giants was standing in a hotel lobby cussing out McGraw in language of the sort "The Little Napoleon" had undoubtedly once curled around his ears. The player poured it on, to the delight of the reporters who had gathered.

"Say, ——" one of the newspapermen finally said, "you know, since you left the Giants, McGraw always speaks very highly of you."

The ballplayer stopped raving. He rubbed his chin. "He does?" he said. Then he grinned. "Well, let me also tell you this. I'd really rather play ball for that no good blankety-blank so-and-so than any manager that ever lived!"

DIZZY DEAN

The One and Only

By Jack Sher

THE day was dry and hot, with just the whisper of a wind stirring the warm air. Big, white clouds moved lazily in the sky, traveling North over the land of Texas. The elements were at peace, but a man-made storm was occurring in a Houston ball park. For on this fine day in 1930 the name and reputation of one of the greatest pitchers of the 20th century was being born. The sassy young hurler was feeling no pain, but the nine other men taking part in the birth were experiencing all manner of anguish, humiliation, despair, and wonder.

The occasion was an exhibition game between the Houston team and the Chicago White Sox. And the arm and antics of the 20-year-old Texas League pitcher were causing wailing and gnashing of teeth in the White Sox dugout. The major-leaguers, one by one, were stepping to the plate, thrashing at air, unable to so much as nick the blinding speed-ball the Houston hero was throwing.

The pitcher's name, when he went into the game, was Jerome Herman Dean. But, before the contest ended, he was to be given a new first name. He was henceforth to be known as "Dizzy." And the name of Dizzy Dean was to dominate the baseball world for a decade, become synonymous with great pitching and colorful clowning. It was to add richly to the lore of our national game, provide us with hundreds of wonderfully human, hilarious, tragic, and inspirational anecdotes. From that day forward, the sight of Dizzy Dean walking to the mound would always mean thrills and laughs and, on a few occasions, a sadness that was deeply felt and moving.

Jerome was completely unaware of all this on the day he was in the process of getting his new name. He was having the time of his life. His big, sloping shoulders were moving rhythmically. He was burnin' them in there. His grin seemed to stretch almost to home plate. His chatter and wisecracks were full of brash, confident, homespun humor.

"Well, lookee, now watta we got here? Jes' keep that ol' bat on the shoulder, fellah. I'm a-gonna breeze this here one right across the mid-

dle. Now don't get the catcher fussed up by swingin' at it. Jes' save yer strength and watch 'er go by!"

Whoosh! A swing and a miss.

Down in the Chicago dugout, manager Owen Bush was more than slightly steamed up. He called to the batter, loudly and derisively.

"What's going on out there? You're supposed to be a major-leaguer! You're lettin' that dizzy kid make a fool outa ya!"

Jerome Herman turned the big grin toward the White Sox dugout. Before facing the batter again, he delivered a few wisecracks to the manager, some derogatory words about the ability of the Chicago hitters.

"Listen to that!" Bush railed, jumping up and down in anger. "Are you guys gonna take that from this dizzy kid?"

It was dizzy, dizzy, dizzy, all afternoon. The adjective was a better description of the batters than of the kid pitcher. They swung and missed until most of them felt as though they had their heads in a revolving door. And down in town that night, the fans, the players on both teams, and Jerome Herman, himself, were talking about the performance of Dizzy Dean.

A name can be born in a moment. It takes action to make it mean something, to breathe life and color into it. Diz gave it that life. A lesser man might have resented the name "Dizzy," but not a guy like Dean. He kept the name because he was born to live up to it and because he loved baseball. Even then, this warm, lovable, uneducated (but wise) kid understood that baseball is more than mere automatons who can hit, catch, or pitch. He knew that the game is also the personalities of the men who play it, their diverse backgrounds and peculiarities.

As his onetime brilliant teammate, Pepper Martin, said: "When ol' Diz was in there pitching, it was more than just another ball game. It was a regular three-ring circus and everybody was wide awake and enjoying being alive."

Even as Jerome Herman Dean, his big right arm undoubtedly would have made him a great winning pitcher. But as Dizzy Dean, he was more than that. He was a tremendous, exciting personality, a strictly screwy, magnificently American character, an advertisement for baseball, an attraction that drew to the game those hitherto unfortunate people who didn't know a scratch hit from a double steal. Like the Babe, he drew 'em in and he kept 'em.

Let it now be admitted that it was far from difficult for Ol' Diz, as he loves to call himself, to live up to his name. The boy from the cotton-fields of Arkansas and Oklahoma was possessed of a boundless enthusiasm, a fanciful imagination, a wild sense of fun, an earthy, articulate speech, a feeling for the dramatic, and a love for entertaining himself and his fellowmen. All this, plus a natural ability to throw a baseball as though it were jet-propelled.

Most pitchers will sit by the hour and tell you the special technique they use in their deliveries. Not Diz. Nobody ever taught Dizzy anything about how to pitch, and it never held any mysteries for him. He believed wholeheartedly, without doubt or jealousy, that he was the most colossal pitcher in the world. And for six years, during the height of his career with the Gas House Gang, he was as good as every boast he ever made.

"They used to talk about that natural rhythm I had and all that," Diz said to me recently, as he sprawled on a golf course in Miami, Florida. "That ain't no way to tell people how I pitched," he grinned. "Tell 'em that I jest used to rare back and fog 'em in there."

That is as fine a description of the way Dean pitched as any of the millions of words about him now in the musty files. Standing six feet, two and a half inches, weighing 175 pounds, with huge, sloping shoulders and tremendous hands, Ol' Diz just took a long, easy stretch and fogged them across the plate. When he settled himself on the mound, it was not only to win a ball game; it was to have a whale of a good time. He cared not a whit about the serious, scientific points of the game. He was out there to win and to have fun. Pitching a game of ball was nothing but sheer, unadulterated razz-ma-tazz and joy.

"I never bothered about what those guys could hit and couldn't hit," he laughed. "All I knowed is that they weren't gonna get a-holt of that ball Ol' Diz was throwin'."

Boston will never forget the afternoon Diz loudly announced to all the Braves that he wasn't going to throw a curve during the entire game. All he was going to need was his fast ball. He didn't unfurl a curve all afternoon, and he shut out the Boston club, 3-0, allowing only three hits.

He sometimes drove a catcher nearly out of his mind by insisting on pitching to a batter's strength. The way Ruth couldn't be bothered "hit-tin' them singles," Diz never bothered about playing it safe. A great pitcher was supposed to strike 'em all out the hard way, and that was what Dean always tried to do.

Frankie Frisch, who was his good friend (as was everybody), and who suffered and sweated and wept and rejoiced while managing the Cards and Dizzy Dean, finally gave up telling Diz how to pitch to enemy batters. The last time he tried it was on a memorable day in September, 1934, when Diz and Paul were going up against the Dodgers. In the clubhouse, before the game, Frisch started down the Brooklyn lineup, trying to explain to Dizzy how to feed 'em to each hitter. Diz had a snort or a wisecrack for each tip. He finally held up his hand.

"Now, take it easy, Frankie," he said in a friendly way. "I've win 26 games this year and it don't look exactly right for no infielder to be tellin' a star like me how to pitch a game o' ball."

Frisch blew his top. He ranted and raved, but it didn't cause Diz to

so much as lose a chomp on the gum he was peacefully chewing. Frisch shouted that Dizzy could pitch any way he damn well pleased and he would get his ears pinned back.

"Aw, now, Frankie," Diz grinned. "I doubt if them Brooks gets a hit off'n me or Paul this afternoon."

Diz hiked blissfully to the mound and, with exasperating and effortless motion, held the Dodgers hitless through eight breathless innings. With two out in the eighth, the Brooklyn boys got their only hit in the ball game. Then Paul took over in the next game and, in his usual stoic fashion, pitched a no-hitter.

The wonderful part of the incident was not only the performance of the devastating Deans. It was what was going on in Dizzy's mind out there in the eighth inning, with only four more batters to face and retire, with a no-hitter in his grasp.

What was Diz thinking about? J. Roy Stockton, then a sports reporter, asked him that question right after the game.

"Thinkin' about? Naw, I wasn't thinkin' about pitchin' a no-hitter. I was havin' a picnic with that Frisch. Did you see them players duckin' behind posts to keep from bustin' out laughin'? I sure hope that Frank manages the Cards forever. I sure love to drive that Dutchman nuts!"

Nobody, of course, knows Dean quite as well as Stockton, now the famous sports editor of the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*. Roy not only covered the fabulous Dean for years—he practically invented him. The character of the irrepressible, carefree, wise-cracking farmer boy that became as familiar to the American public as Li'l Abner, was drawn in large measure by Stockton. Many of the best Dean anecdotes which I have incorporated in this story appeared in print for the first time under Roy's byline in his phenomenally successful book, *The Gas House Gang*.

The deeds of great men live after them, but they are not always in the record books, as every smart baseball man knows. This was certainly true of the career of Dizzy Dean. The record book gives you only a small idea of how great a pitcher he was. Records meant nothing to him. He never pitched a no-hit game. Trying for a no-hitter would have meant deliberate, serious study. It would have meant turning a ball game into a chore, into toil, which would have ruined the day for Diz. He was a great competitor, he loved to win, but what the cold, dead record books would say in future years just didn't interest him.

Dizzy Dean was "the pitcher for today," not for posterity. "I love to pitch," he said in 1936 when he was marching to the mound more frequently than anyone in the league. "I could go on pitchin' forever." And that is why, when the lights were doused on his pitching career, it was such a cruel, miserable time for him.

In spite of himself, Ol' Diz set some stunning records, regardless of the fact that he seemed to be out on the mound only to enjoy life and

the warm sun on his back and the crowds and the good feeling of a called strike. Dean set a modern record for strikeouts when he whiffed 17 Cubs in one game on July 30, 1933. Bob Feller tied Dean's mark in 1936 and broke it in 1938.

Starting in 315 games, Dizzy won 150, lost only 83. During his first six years with the Cards, before he hurt his arm, Diz averaged 22 wins a year. During his best season, 1934, Dean won 30 ball games, lost seven. In every one of his first six years, the Great Man struck out over 100 men per season. In 1933, his second season in the majors, he fanned a total of 199 men. In '34 and '35, he led the league in games won and his all-time total of strikeouts reached the amazing figure of 1,154. His lifetime earned-run average was 3.03 per game. And Diz wouldn't like you to forget that he was also a dangerous long-ball hitter.

"In one of them Worlt Series," he said, "I got two hits in one inning. Only a couple of guys ever got two hits in one inning in a Worlt Series. And no pitcher never done that except me."

Diz is right. He rapped out a double and a single in one inning of the 1934 Series against the Tigers. But what you love about the guy is when he adds: "My brother Paul, he's got a better Worlt Series pitchin' record than me. Paul wins two out of two. Me, I win two and I lose two."

Ballplayers of the early Thirties still love to gather and talk about the time "Ol' Diz did this" and "old Diz did that." Nobody ever resented Dizzy's pranks, because they always sprang spontaneously out of a genuine sense of fun and high spirits.

One day in Chicago, with the thermometer registering 100 in the shade, the delightful Dean built a bonfire in front of the dugout and huddled over it wearing a blanket, rising now and then to war-whoop like an Indian. In St. Louis, he announced that he'd show the world how to cook. When curious spectators arrived to watch Diz whip up a fancy omelet, he pegged eggs at them—eggs made of rubber and painted white.

But the innumerable stunts Dizzy staged were not nearly so funny as his natural, everyday actions, his homely, hilarious way of speaking, his glorious and honest bragging. Diz was a comedian in the truest sense of the word, a great showman, a natural, a sort of combination Will Rogers and Harpo Marx. He knew he was funny. There was not the slightest strain or phoniness about his humor. He loved the sound of laughter and was big-hearted enough to want the whole world to enjoy him.

Listen to Dizzy, back in 1934 before the World Series, talking to Roy Stockton: "Ol' Frank is sayin' he don't know who is gonna pitch that first game. But he ain't foolin' me none. I told him this afternoon that there wasn't no use kiddin' hisself. There is only one guy to pitch that first

game and that's ol' Diz. I guess Frisch is trying to use what they call this Sikology on ol' Diz, figurin' he don't want me nervous before the game. He can't fool me none. Ol' Diz never got nervous in his life about no ball game. Who won the pennant? Why, me and Paul. And who's gonna win the Series? Me and Paul. Them Tigers is lucky if they get a good foul off'n us."

It was just Diz talking, loving the sound of his voice, generous, easy-going, collecting his share of yuks, wisely knowing that he reeked with color and was the answer to a sports reporter's prayer. Wild horses couldn't have dragged him away from baseball, from the sheer physical joy of pitching, the pleasure of good company and ready ears, listening to him say, "Boy, I sure poured it on them Pirates yesterday. Ol' Diz has sure got it. 'Course, stacked up agin my brother Paul, I'm just a great big semi-pro."

Nothing hurt Dizzy more than the suggestion that he was a braggart or a windbag, or that he occasionally strayed from the truth. Words like "truth" are vague, at best, linked only to the morals of our time, and to Diz the truth was anything that people wanted to hear.

He was once approached by an advertising man who offered him a hundred bucks to make a five-minute radio transcription about his baseball career. Diz readily accepted. Ballplayers and friends sat open-mouthed when they heard Dizzy, who had gone only to the second grade in school, blandly telling the public, "I mastered the art of pitchin' while I was attendin' Oklahoma State Teacher's College."

When the boys in the clubhouse asked Diz where he got off telling such a whopper, Diz grinned and told them that he figured that the advertising people who gave him the hundred dollars deserved some new and fresh information about him for that kind of money.

Diz was welcomed everywhere he went, not only by people who depended on him to supply them with stories for papers, but by ballplayers on opposing clubs, managers, fans, and well-wishers. There was never an ounce of aloofness or snobbery in his make-up. He treated bankers the way he treated ballplayers, club presidents in the same manner as rookies, often to their displeasure. Before any ball game, you would be apt to find Diz anywhere—in the stands, on the street outside, or up on the roof.

Manager Bill Terry, who was always being surprised by Dean, was astounded one day to discover Dizzy leaning against the wall in the Giant dressing room at the Polo Grounds. It was just a few minutes before the game, and Terry was going over the St. Louis lineup.

"You'll have to get out of here, Diz," Terry said. "We're going over the St. Louis hitters."

"Go right ahead, Bill," Diz said. "You can't learn me nothin' about them fellahs. I know all their weaknesses."

In doing people favors, in bending over backwards to please all those who thought Diz was a great guy, the madcap Dean sometimes got them into trouble. Three New York sportswriters were hauled on the carpet one day by their editors, demanding to know why each of the three writers had Dizzy born in a different town on a different day of the year.

Diz had told the reporter from the *Times* that he was born in Holdenville, Oklahoma, on August 22. The man from the *Brooklyn Eagle* listened as Diz said that he was born in Lucas, Arkansas, on January 16. And the reporter from the *Daily News* got it straight from Diz's mouth that he first saw the light of day in Bond, Mississippi, on January 22, 1911.

Diz explained it this way: "Well, I liked all three of them boys. They was always nice to ol' Diz when it come to givin' him a good write-up. I figured I'd give each of them a scoop, an' that's why I mentioned these three different places. What was all the fussin' about, anyway? Ain't one place as good as another?"

As most sports fans know "Jerome" and "Herman" were not the front names his own parents gave to him. How Diz happened to become Jerome Herman Dean is a story that gives you the true key to his character, an incident that really shows you how generous, unselfish, and great-hearted he has always been.

The pitcher the world was to know as Dizzy Dean was born in Lucas, Arkansas, on January 16, 1911, the third son of destitute, cotton-picking sharecroppers. His work-worn mother, with love and high hope, named her son Jay Hanna, after a Wall Street financier, Jay Gould, and a celebrated publisher, Mark Hanna.

Almost as soon as he could talk and move around, the gregarious kid with the sunny disposition was one of the best-loved boys among the poor tenant farmers. At the age of six or seven, when he was not even high enough to see over a stalk of cotton, one of Jay's friends, a boy his own age, took sick and died. One of the first to visit the grief-stricken father was young Jay Dean. He struggled for a way to console the man. Finally he told him that he thought so much of his friend who had died that he would take the boy's name for his own. And that is how he became known as Jerome Herman Dean.

Ol' Diz was never being insincere or corny when he told friends and newspapermen, "Some of the things I seen in this here life almost cause my ol' heart to bust right through my sweatshirt."

During the years Diz was at his height as a hurler, he seldom spoke of his childhood other than in a joking manner. He gave the public an impression of a happy-go-lucky, uneducated boy for whom the world had always been a choice oyster. He joked about his lack of schooling, his days in the cottonfields. Only those very close to him knew the intimate details of the rough and pathetic life that preceded his career in

baseball. It wasn't in Diz's heart or nature to give to his host of fans and followers anything but a happy, laughter-laden show.

A talk with Dean's devoted wife, Pat, helps reveal the Dizzy Dean the public really never knew. She has been much more than an ordinary wife to him. She's been a friend, a mother, an adviser, and loyal companion for 17 rich, happy, and stormy years.

"If you get to know Diz," she said to me, "you'll find out that there has been a great deal of pathos in his life."

Getting to know Diz is not easy. It may seem easy, at first, because Dean is one of God's most friendly creatures—warm, talkative, lively, and humorous. Ol' Diz hasn't changed very much. If it weren't for the graying hair and some added weight, you wouldn't be able to tell the Diz of today from that garrulous, lovable right-hander who was the pride and panic of the National League a dozen or so years ago. His large, blue eyes are as full of the old Ned, his speech is as droll and pungent, his big, heavy head wags as merrily above the powerful, slow-moving frame.

The first of my many talks with Diz took place at the Riviera Country Club, a luxurious golf course in Coral Gables. He sprawled indolently on the grass near the eighth green, watching and kibitzing a hot and heavy golf match being waged between four friends—three wealthy businessmen and a Hollywood actor.

"How are ya?" the big voice boomed. "Say, you're just in time. These birds are some golfers. They're a-bettin' their heads off an' I wouldn't be surprised to see six or seven thousand a-changin' hands this afternoon. Ol' Diz was playin' this mornin'," he went on, "goin' right good, shoot me a 70. Don't go writin' that down now," he grinned. "None of these boys will want to play with ol' Diz and I plan to pick up a little money in these parts. Say, I sure wish I was pitchin' ball again. Did you read about how I did with them St. Louie Browns? I pitched me four innin's and nobody reached third base. Made only 33 pitches and I woulda gone on and pitched the whole game if I hadn't hurt my leg runnin' from first to second. I was feelin' better all the time in there. Ol' Diz was gettin' faster with every pitch."

Dizzy was talking about pitching the last game of the 1947 season for the St. Louis Browns. Beginning in 1942 Diz broadcast the Browns' games in St. Louis. The Browns, who wound up in the cellar in '47, caused Dizzy a great deal of displeasure. At one point, near the end of the season, Diz leaned into the mike and said, "I'm sittin' up here in this broadcastin' booth and I should be down there. Why, even with this here sore arm, I could do better than them pitchers the Browns has got."

The Brownie front office, whether in irritation or desperation, or as a device to lure some cash customers into the park, called Diz on his boast and hired him to pitch the last game of the year against the White Sox.

Just as Diz said, he was going great until he hurt his leg. "I led the league in hittin' last year," he grinned. "One thousand percent I got. I come to the plate just onct and I get a hit. And we are winnin' that old ball game until I went and done that to my leg."

No, Ol' Diz hasn't changed. During my frequent talks with Dean he scratched up (as Diz put it) some of the more intimate details of his life and times—the years before, during, and after his great career as a pitcher.

He was born on a rickety, wooden bed in a clapboard shack that stood on worked-over cotton soil, a patch of Arkansas ground that his father did not own and would never earn enough to own. The wife of Albert Monroe Dean bore five children. Diz never saw his oldest sister, Sara May. She died at the age of four months. His oldest brother, Charlie, died when he was nine years old. Diz's mother died when the boy was three. Elmer was then five and Paul was two years old.

"I don't remember much about my mother," Diz said, "except sometimes I can remember how she looked. She died of tuberculosis. Sara May? Well, I don't know what took her away. I know my brother Charlie died 'cause he wasn't able to get proper food and medicine. If we had them things, maybe my mother wouldn't have died either."

Albert Dean was a migratory worker, moving his family from one patch of land to another, from state to state, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, following the crop. It was sunup to sundown work, children doing the work of grown men to add to the meager, below-subsistence wages.

"My dad did the best he could," Diz said. "I never knowed a man who had it tougher. He was a regular pal to us kids and he hadda be a mother, too."

When Diz was six years old, alongside his brother Paul, who was four, they were planting in the fields with a team of mules. At the age of 10, when most kids are in the fifth grade learning geography, Diz was learning his lessons first-hand, riding across Oklahoma in an old jalopy.

"When I was 10 years old," he said, not without pride, "I could do a man's work. I could pick me four to five hundred pounds o' cotton a day. I'd get up at five in the mornin', set to milkin', eat me some sowbelly and black-eyed peas, an' go into the field. We was gettin' 25 cent to 50 cent a hundred for cotton in them days, and I was earnin' about two dollars a day, man's wages."

It is not true, as has sometimes been jokingly printed (some joke!) that the Dean boy did not have a pair of shoes until he went into the Army. "We, Paul and Elmer and me, had one pair of shoes each," Diz said. "They was our Winter shoes, and we took 'em off in the Summer to save the leather. That didn't hurt us none. It was warm in the Summer. Hell, it was downright hot. What sometimes hurt us was the way

Dad looked when the food was skimpy. We knowed how hard he worked and there never seemed to be enough. When I look back on it, like now," he said, "I sometimes wonder how we all went through it."

Diz will tell you now that his biggest thrill, next to some of the ball games he has pitched, was seeing a field of cotton all picked, knowing that he had taken part in the labor that would bring money to the family. He also will tell you that there is no bond closer than that of a working family, those who toil together. That wonderful affection that Diz and Paul have always felt for each other, the loyalty and pride in each other's achievements, began long before either of them took to the big-league mounds and became famous through the strength of their right arms.

The sportswriter who tagged Paul with the name "Daffy" was both cute and wrong. Paul was a shy, sweet-natured, soft-spoken young man without an ounce of the showmanship of his older brother. The sometimes wild and humorous things he did were done either at Diz's instigation, or because he loved the color and great spirit of the elder Dean and felt he should do his best to live up to his brother's reputation as a wag. In return for this loyalty, Diz repaid his brother with praise.

Diz felt the same way about his older brother Elmer. It was always a sort of sad thing to him that Elmer could never make the grade in the big leagues. Even today, Diz will loyally and stoutly maintain that Elmer was as good a ballplayer as Paul and himself.

"Gol darnit," Diz said, "the trouble was that Elmer hadda work too hard and he never got no chance to show what he could do until it was too late. Why, that boy was a great catcher an' infielder. He could whip that ol' ball around like any Dean. He just got his chance too late, that's all, when he was too old."

Even at the height of their success, during their dizziest and most wonderful victories, the Dean boys were always in there pitching for their brother Elmer. On that fine day in Brooklyn, when Paul and Diz trounced the Dodgers, 1-0 and 3-1, they got in a lick about Elmer.

"Hey," manager Casey Stengel wailed at the end of the second game, "are there any more at home like you two?"

"You betcha life!" Diz sounded off. "There's my brother Elmer. Casey, you ought to go down there and sign him right up. He's as good as we two ever was. He'd be a-playin' for the Cards right now," Diz grinned, "but that Frisch has got his hands full o' Deans right now, more'n he kin handle."

Stengel was so impressed that he looked into the matter. He discovered that Elmer was a ballplayer, but that the astute Rickey hadn't overlooked any bets. Branch had listened to the pep talks of Paul and Diz and had given Elmer a tryout with the Cardinals. The oldest of the Dean boys, in spite of Paul's and Diz's protestations, had not been good

enough for the big leagues. Not wanting to be separated from his brothers, Elmer worked as a peanut vendor in the St. Louis ball park.

There is an oft-told story about Elmer that must be repeated in any chronicle of the Dean family. Its full flavor and pathos and humor can be experienced only when you hear it from the lips of Diz himself, who played a small part in the story.

"It was back there about '24 or '25," Diz began, "and we was travelin' around from field to field huntin' for work. Dad an' Paul and me was ridin' in one car and Ol' Elmer, he was ridin' in a car behind us with some friends of ours. Well, we crossed some railroad tracks jest as an ol' freight is comin'. This cotton-pickin' feller drivin' the car Elmer is in, he's held up by the train. We was supposed to all meet in Dallas that night. We wait an' we wait, but they don't show up. Well, now, we had to hustle us up some work before we go to starvin', so we drive someplace else and get us a job."

Diz paused and shook his heavy head. "Gol' darn if we don't lose Elmer for four years! We sure missed 'im, but Dad ain't worried much 'cause Elmer is a grown man an' can take care of himself. But it's kinda sorry without him. Elmer, he finally reads in a newspaper about me pitchin' a ball game in Houston and he hotfoots it to see me and we are all together again ever since."

Albert Dean could never afford to stay in one place long enough for his sons to get an education. But, inadvertently, he did introduce them to something that would some day enable them to earn more money than many a college graduate. He taught them the game of baseball. In the early days of his marriage, before he had been burdened with children and responsibilities, Al Dean had spent several seasons playing third base for the Hartford ball club in Connecticut.

"They had let Dad keep that Hartford uniform," Diz said. "He always carried it with him. I'll never forget how good it looked on him. It was a blue color and pretty, plumb wore out, but it was mighty shiny and fine-lookin' to us kids. We was always beggin' him to put it on."

Al Dean couldn't buy his kids gloves and balls and bats, so he made them. He fashioned a bat out of hickory wood, and padded worn-out work gloves into fielders' mitts. "He could make the best darn baseball you ever seen," Diz related. "He could make a baseball outa almost anything, jest scraps of stuff, like an ol' shoe tongue, a hunk of inner-tube for the insides, a piece of sock and mebbe some twine. He could make a mighty lively ball."

The way Diz tells it, the Dean family was baseball crazy. They played every chance they got. They played in the failing light of dusk, after a day's work in the fields. They played on Sundays and sometimes, when traveling from job to job, they would stop the dust-covered jalopy and pile out on a nearby field for a game of pitch and catch.

"I read onc't where this Bob Feller's dad learned him how to throw a ball down there behind the barn on a farm in Ioway," Diz said. "Dad told us some of the rules of the game," Diz went on, "but he sure didn't have to learn us how to throw that ol' ball and catch it. It just came natural."

Unlike Feller's baseball tutelage, which was planned and serious, the Dean boys got their instruction in haphazard fashion. They played the game for relaxation and fun. Before they were in their 'teens, they were playing on pick-up teams with grown men, and they often served as "ringers" in whatever town the working family happened to be near.

"I guess I always wanted to be a pitcher," Diz went on. "I never knowed much about this pro ball and gettin' paid for playing and all that until I was about 14. I never saw a big-league game until I played in one, but I heard one onc't. It was on the radio, one of them crystal sets. One of the neighbors built hisself one and he lemme lissen to a ball game. I'll never forget it. The Senators are playin' the Pirates and ol' Walter Johnson was sure slammin' 'em in there that day. I was sure excited about it."

Diz insists that the players on the Cards, who saw him pitch during those six glorious years with St. Louis, still missed out on seeing some of the greatest games he ever hurled. "When I was pitchin' in the Army, for the ol' 12th Field Artillery, I was as good an' mebbe better than I was when I was up there in the National League. That ball I chucked for the 12th was just as full o' steam and my curve was right as rain."

Diz joined the Army when he was 16. He got in through the help of his two step-brothers, Claude and Herman, who were in the service and thought it would do Diz a world of good. The fact that he was two years under age didn't matter much then. Diz was big and strong and when he said he was 18 nobody doubted him. Besides, the 12th Field Artillery needed a pitcher.

"I was all right so long as I was wearin' that baseball uniform the Army give me," Diz said. "It was the first baseball uniform I ever wore and I was mighty proud of it. But I had a sorry time in them fatigue clothes and that khaki. Ol' Diz jest wasn't cut out to be no soldier. I never could learn to make a bed proper and I had two left feet when it came to drillin' an' I always seemed to be a-doin' the wrong thing as far as them sergeants was concerned. Seems like every day I'd hike to that board and there was Jerome Herman Dean on the KP list. It got so that me an' them pots and pans were a-talkin' to each other."

Diz served three years and nine months of a four-year hitch. With only three months to go, Jerome got a week's leave and journeyed to see his father, who was working in a cotton field near San Antonio, Texas. His dad had had a good year and had saved almost \$600, more than he had ever been able to get together in his whole life.

"Well, son," Albert Dean said, "by the look of your face that Army life ain't agreeing with you."

"Dad," Diz said, "it sure would make me happy to get outa there."

"How much do you reckon it would take?" his father asked.

"A lotta money," Diz said. "About one hunnert and twenty bucks."

The elder Dean dug down into his pocket and came up with the money, instructing his son to go back to the Army and buy his way out.

The year was 1929 and Jerome Herman Dean was 19 years old when he joined his Dad again in San Antonio, Texas. He took a job with the San Antonio Public Service, working as an assistant to a man who read gas meters. Dean grinned when he explained his job. "I used to follow that fella around jest to keep him company and carry his tools. But I guess my main job was to pitch ball for that Public Service Company team."

The loud thump of Dean's fast ball hitting the PS catcher's glove attracted the attention of a St. Louis Cardinal scout, Don Curtis. He watched Diz pitch one ball game and signed him then and there. Diz was shipped to St. Joseph in the Western League, won his first game, 4-3, started a triple play, and kept the St. Joe fans in stitches with his wonderful antics on and off the field.

While winning 17 games and losing only eight, the Dean kid borrowed cars from the hero-worshipping citizens and, driving pell-mell through the streets, wound up in the cubbyhole provided by the Chief of Police. The chief, like everyone else, couldn't resist his charm and let him out. He registered and paid bills at three sleeping places, the YMCA, the St. Francis Hotel, and the Hotel Robidoux, explaining that he wanted to be handy to a bed whenever he felt like hitting the sack. Oliver French, the club's business manager, was still trying to straighten out Dizzy's bills when the startling young fireballer was transferred to Houston in the Texas League.

Diz made his debut in Houston by pitching a 12-1 victory. The next day, the story all over town was about how Jerome Herman Dean had apologized for his performance to Fred Ankenman, who owned the Houston ball club. "That sure was a sorry game I pitched yestaday, Mr. Ankenman," Diz said. "Can you imagine me allowin' them fellahs to get a run off'n me? It ain't gonna happen again."

In the history of Houston, there has never been a ballplayer of such astounding popularity as Dizzy Dean. The tall-talking, big-hearted Texans took Diz into their homes and their hearts. In those days, Diz fancied himself quite a fighter due to a one-blow knockout he had administered to a strapping bully of the Pueblo team during his career with St. Joseph. Diz wanted to prove to the Houston fans what a rough and ready boy he was, and he loves to tell the story of his scrap with a ballplayer named Al Todd.

"This here Todd," Diz relates, "gets a hit off'n me, which makes me mad. So the next time he comes up I chuck a ball at his bean. This makes him mad an' he drops his bat and comes out to the mound toward me. I get all ready to do some jawin' with him. I got a dandy wise crack all ready for him. But he fools me. He hauls off and whacks me one on the whiskers. Down I go. I get up figurin' that he is sure to go to talkin' now, but he lets me have another one and down I go again, a-seein' stars up there in the sun. Well, he never did go to talkin' and I never got so tired of being knocked down. Ol' Diz sure lost that one."

The great-hearted, good-humored way he took the licking from Todd endeared him even more to the Houston fans. There was not much rejoicing in the Texas city when Diz, in less than a year, pitched his way into the major leagues. The St. Louis Cards brought him up at the tail-end of the 1930 season, and the players on the club grew slap-happy with glee listening to Diz tell how he was going to wrap the ball around the necks of those big-league hitters.

The Gas House Gang loved Diz before he ever pitched a ball game for them. He was their kind of ballplayer, loud, fun-loving, supremely confident. But Gabby Street, then the Card manager, a rather dour, skeptical, ex-Army sergeant, never did take to Dean's ways very much. With a deep desire to tone Diz down, he picked the roughest opponent he could for the young rookie, sending him in on a September day in 1930 to tame the hard-hitting Pirates.

In the first inning, the Pittsburgh club pasted Diz for two hits. When he trooped back to the bench, Gabby Street presented him with a smirking face. That didn't sit very well with ol' Diz, who marched back out and from that inning on pitched almost perfect ball, allowing the Pirates only one more hit and winning the game.

In 1931, Diz turned up for Spring training in Bradenton, Florida, as big as life and as full of the old breeze as a sideshow barker. Life was a glorious, free 'n' easy thing now, and Ol' Diz didn't mind telling all and sundry folk that he was goin' to stand the National League on its ear.

Right from scratch, he ran into trouble with the grumbling Gabby. When Diz grew a little lax about reporting to practice on time, Street would let go a vituperative barrage that reminded Diz of his Army days. It was touch and go all the time, with Diz threatening every other day to take mind and body back to Houston where he was appreciated.

The players who had such a deep affection for the Dean kid were always trying to patch things up between Dean and Street. Diz would try to get along with the manager, then give up in disgust and go fishing, announcing that "this here Street is the gol' darndest, most insultin' bird I ever knowed. I don't likely think I kin ever play ball fer him. The way he treats Ol' Diz is a shame."

Toward the end of Spring training, Diz had to undergo a tonsil opera-

tion, and Gabby Street sighed with relief, believing that the trip to the hospital would not only quiet Diz down but perhaps put him out of action for awhile. He didn't know his Dizzy Dean from his elbow. Diz bounced out of the hospital with a bang, saying, "No little thing like havin' my tonsils out is gonna keep Ol' Diz down. If that Street gives me half a chance, I'm gonna win us at least 30 games this year."

Diz made his first appearance of the 1931 Spring training campaign as a relief pitcher. With the Cards leading the world champion Athletics by a narrow 5-4, in an exhibition game, and with the A's staging a rally, Gabby crooked a finger at Diz. The pitcher got off the bench and, as he passed Street on his way to the mound, he said, "Don't worry none, Gab. These guys couldn't hit me with a handful o' birdshot."

The first Philly batter that Diz faced rapped a screaming double to left field. Diz grinned. Then he turned around and grinned again, so the bleacher fans could see it, too. And then that great, wonderful, goofy character struck out the next three batters. Street could hardly be held when Ol' Diz filled the bases the next inning, then fanned the next two men and retired the third on an easy infield pop fly to win the ball game.

The home fans didn't get a glimpse of dynamite Dean's delivery in 1931. Just as the season got under way, Diz was shipped back to Houston. At the time, the sportswriters' version of Dizzy's dismissal was that the pitcher was sent down to save Street from the nut house. It was also rumored that the way Diz was handling his financial affairs was causing the strict, cautious Branch Rickey some sleepless nights. It is true that the slip of paper called a "check" was a new and wonderfully magic thing to the once poverty-stricken Diz. When the pieces of paper wound up in El Branch's office, the Deacon was fit to be tied.

Let it be said in defense of Ol' Diz that no man deserved the rich, full life more than the kid who had slaved in the cotton fields. And yet, money did not really mean anything to the free-spending Diz—money wasn't anything at all, it just sort of quieted the nerves. It was mighty fine to be able to write checks for fancy togs and good meals and a spot of fun.

It was during this time that Rickey, through the club secretary, Clarence Lloyd, put Diz on the famous "Dollar-a-Day" allowance. That was just what Diz received, one dollar a day. The single piece of greenery was dished out to him every morning and was generally spent by eleven o'clock. Which caused Diz to moan and wail, not without reason, that he was being treated mighty poorly.

Although he still feels sort of sour on Sam Breadon, the ex-owner of the Cards, Diz bears no malice toward Rickey. "You could never say Ol' Branch was free with a dollar," Diz grinned, "but he did try to get me to save my money." Diz suddenly began to laugh. "Boy, oh boy! I remember one day I was a-standin' in the clubhouse yellin' and rootin' around

about Ol' Breadon and how he was starvin' me. I was sayin' that this Breadon is the tightest ol' coot what ever lived, and a-callin' him names, when somebody taps me on the shoulder. I never seen this Breadon until then and there he was as big as life an' he says to me, 'Just what is the trouble, Dean?' Well, I was in it then, so I says that this here Breadon is a mean old so-and-so who should be givin' me two dollars a day instead of one. He says to me, 'Come up to my office, Dean.'

Diz adjourned to the privacy of Sam Breadon's office and the ball-players who were in the clubhouse that day will never forget the triumphant look on Dizzy's face when he came back into the room a half-hour or so later.

"What happened, Diz?" Andy High asked.

"I got the two bucks!" Dean said, hoisting the money aloft.

It broke up the clubhouse. Players were still holding their sides and rolling around the floor when Diz went out with his two bucks to paint the town red. Not long after that he was sent back to the Texas League.

Diz did not return to Houston chastened in spirit. He went back in triumph and was welcomed as a hero, the fans packing the ball park and cheering their heads off as Dizzy showed the crowd he was better'n any pitcher the major leagues had. He might have been, at that. He won 26 games for Houston that year, and lost only 10—which is pretty fair pitching.

The year in Houston was not only the best thing that ever happened to Diz, it was one of the happiest years in his life. Shortly after he returned he met Patricia Nash, the girl who was to play such an important part in his life, help him over so many rough spots, and insure for the happy-go-lucky ballplayer a life of security. But let's let Diz tell about the meeting and courtship.

"Just after I get to Houston," Diz said, "I go into Paul's Shoe Store where my step-brother's wife is working. I set my eyes on this girl behind the hosiery counter and I ask my brother who is that pretty black-haired girl? His wife introduces her to me and I ast her for a date, and one week from that day we get married, and me and 'Mom,' that's what I always call her, we been together ever since and we always will be.

"Gol' darn," Diz grinned, "that was some courtin'! I was broke, as usual, and I just had to make an impression on Pat. Jest before our first date I go to a car dealer in town and I tell him my troubles. He says, 'Don't you worry none, Diz. You just take this brand-new automobile here—it was a Hupmobile—and you can pay me on time.' Boy, I sure thought that would make a hit with her! I drive up as smart and sassy as ever and I say, 'Lookee here, this is what I'm buying you for a wedding present.' You know what she done? She just give me a look and she says, 'Diz, you drive that automobile right back to where you got it. It's

high time you plan on savin' your money for the future and you can't afford this car.' That's the kinda girl Mom was."

Diz took the car back. A few nights later, in a borrowed car, somewhat less flashy, he turned up for another date. "I never did no drinkin'," Diz said, "but I bought me a bottle this night, figuring I'd do a little showin' off. Well, we are drivin' along and I take out this bottle and start to take a drink. Pat just snatches it outa my hands and tosses it out the window, and she says, 'Baseball players shouldn't drink.' And, gol' darn, anyone will tell you that Ol' Diz never took a drink from that day until he hurt his arm back there in 1937."

The future Mrs. Dean was actually making more money than Diz was when they got married a week from the day they met. Diz confesses to borrowing two dollars to pay for the marriage license. In more ways than one, it was the wisest investment he has ever made. Pat came to see him pitch for the first time on the day they were married and, on and off the diamond, she has been with him heart and soul ever since.

"We had to borrow money to start our married life together," she said, "but I've never regretted a moment of it. Diz always made me feel as though he needed me. Diz has always leaned over backwards to give me credit for helping him, but don't forget you can't help a person who doesn't want to be helped. Diz always wanted help and advice. We've always gotten along beautifully. We're sort of like ham and eggs, Diz and I."

Even under Pat's watchful eye, Dizzy's irrepressible, showy spirit could not be curbed. In '32 and '33, with Street in the driver's seat, Ol' Diz and his hi-jinks clipped along at a merry pace. He missed trains, drew fines, made outlandish statements to the press and won 18 games in 1932 and 20 the next year. There were numerous squabbles over money, which is not hard to understand when you consider that the magnificently generous Breadon was paying the National League's most colorful attraction \$3,000 per year.

In 1933, Diz was not gathering unto himself much of that coin of the realm. But he consoled himself by playing Peck's Bad Boy and having a barrel of fun. Along with his playful friend, Pepper Martin, Diz's imaginative pranks sent many a shiver up and down the conservative Branch Rickey's spine. There was that beautiful incident in the dining-room and kitchen of the swank Bellevue-Stratford Hotel in Philadelphia.

Just as the dinner hour was getting under way, in stormed Diz, Pepper, and Heine Schuble, decked out in greasy workmen's clothes, looking like a combination of railroad brakemen and members of the painter's union. The three wags proceeded to renovate the dining room, pounding and hammering and swinging ladders around. Then they went to the kitchen and raised such merry hell that three of the cooks tried to assassinate them.

As one Cardinal ballplayer, who is still playing ball and shall remain nameless, said: "Branch and Breadon used to roll their eyes and shake their fingers and tell newspapermen how unmanageable Diz was. But at private luncheons, and among their friends, they were always telling funny stories about Ol' Diz, helping to make him a whacky figure. And they were taking in plenty of cash at the gate on the marvelous personality and color Dean had."

The Cardinal owners also had Dizzy Dean to thank for bringing them another great pitcher in his brother Paul. Diz talked it up about Paul and was mostly responsible for bringing his brother into the big league.

"Just after I broke into the majors," Diz said, "Paul and Dad was pickin' cotton down in El Campo, Texas. I take a scout with me and we go to see 'em. Do you know where Paul signed his Cardinal contract? He signed right down there in the middle of a cotton field at El Campo."

Along with the year Babe Ruth whacked the 60 homers, there has never been a more exciting year in baseball than 1934, the season Diz and Paul Dean were at their absolute height.

Diz was not bragging, he was just stating it straight from the heart when he said at the start of the 1934 season, "Paul and me are the best pitchers in the National League, and between us we'll win 45 games." By the middle of August, they had won 37 games. When the Dean boys hung up their gloves that year, they had a total of 49 victories between them, 30 for Diz, 19 for the kid brother, including four crucial World Series wins!

That was the first year Frankie Frisch managed the Cards. Frisch loved the Dean boys, but this did not spare him the routine of standing before the mirror each morning to see what brand new gray hair had sprouted as a result of Diz's and Paul's latest hinky-dink.

There was that day in Chicago when the boys were feeling rather sad because of their lowly salaries and, between them, had dropped a double header to the Cubs, 2-1 and 1-0. When Frisch counted noses on the train that night, Paul and Diz were not in the line-up. They were relaxing at a party on the outskirts of Chicago.

Before going AWOL, the Deans had staged a show in the Cards' dressing room. Surrounded by reporters, they posed for pictures, tearing up their uniforms to the accompaniment of Diz's dialogue about how Breadon and Rickey were underpaying him and his brother, Paul. Frisch fined the boys \$100 apiece while Rickey and Breadon clucked their tongues. The Deans went to see Judge Landis, who upheld the fine.

"We went on strike again a little later," Diz said. "Why, between us, we was only gettin' \$10,500 a year salary. Can you imagine, Paul is winnin' all those ball games and he is being paid only \$3,000 per year. All I got to tell you is that Frankie got us together with Ol' Branch, and Paul gets hisself a \$2,500 raise."

You won't find a ballplayer in either league who will tell you that Diz and Paul weren't worth twice what they were being paid. It is true that they were making plenty of outside money on exhibition games and endorsements, but that was through their own efforts. At the close of the 1934 season, when the Deans had pitched the Cards to the world championship, the St. Louis front office magnanimously offered each of them a \$500 bonus.

"Paul was plumb disgusted," Diz grinned. "He wasn't gonna take the money. 'Take it, Paul,' I tells him, 'that's all you're gonna get.'"

In '32 and '33, Diz was paid \$3,000 per season. In '34, when he won 30 games, he was upped to \$7,500. In 1935, he got a raise to \$18,500, and he was paid \$27,500 in 1936 and 1937. The total sum in salary the Card management paid him in six years is less than Bob Feller has received for one season with the Indians.

Diz did get some lovely and inspiring letters from Branch Rickey during his latter years with the Redbirds. After one of Diz's escapades, Rickey wrote him, saying in part, that Diz should not "arrogate to himself the prerogatives of Frankie Frisch, but with the eagerness of a soldier in the ranks, put his shoulder to the wheel and strive for the common cause."

When Diz got the high-sounding letter translated, he made one of baseball's most classic comments. "My shoulder is lopsided on one side from that wheel," Diz lamented. "What does Mr. Rickey want me to do—play the outfield and lead the boys' band?"

"Jack," Diz said, smiling, "I just want to say that they sure worked me in 1934. I was as skinny as you. Why, I worked in 50 ball games, and at the end of the season Ol' Diz was down to 161 pounds."

In fairness to the St. Louis club, it must be admitted that Diz seldom railed against pitching a game of baseball. He believed that he could pitch and win a ball game every day in the year and, by his own admission, "Baseball was never no work to me." But it would seem to any objective observer that a wiser management would have had a little more mercy on the Great Man's arm and spirit.

"I guess the trouble with me," Diz said, in the course of one of our talks, "was that I jest loved to throw that ball. Why, I would get out there an' pitch battin' practice an' then go in there an' pitch a gol' darn ball game. I never paid much attention to the batters I was pitchin' to, except them Waner boys, Paul and Lloyd. Them two Pirates was always the toughest on Ol' Diz. An' them Cubs, as a team, were always rough. They're the only club in the National League who beat me more games than I beat them."

Nobody will ever know whether Diz considered himself a greater pitcher than Paul. Paul was a Dean, and how could you be greater than a Dean? As much as Paul loved and respected Diz, the older brother's

sense of humor did get under his skin once. It was a day in St. Louis and Paul, on the mound, was not quite at his best.

"Them hitters," Diz said, "were catchin' hold of that ball and linin' them drives past Paul's head. They weren't gettin' no hits. The fielders were catchin' em. But they sure were sockin' that ol' ball. I got to kiddin' Paul an' long about the fifth innin' I yelled out to him, 'Hey, boy, you better tie yourself to that rubber!' Paul got mad as fire and he walks off'n the mound an' he comes in to me and he plunks that ball in my hand and he says, 'Diz, if you kin do better, get out there and do it.' Well," Diz laughed, "there was nothin' for me to do but go out there an' pitch. We won that one together, Paul an' me."

Diz's colorful clowning always overshadowed the fact that he was one of baseball's most clean-living athletes, a man who took pride in keeping himself in great shape. If he had any faults, it was a love for playing poker, which, in a ballplayer, is as natural a habit as spitting in a glove. Diz was as carefree and reckless in a poker game with the boys as he was on the mound. He still loves to gamble, betting wildly on almost every golf match he plays.

It wasn't until 1934 that Albert Monroe Dean, who gave baseball two great pitchers, saw his first big-league ball game. "I always figured," Diz said, "that Dad didn't want to see me in action up there, until Paul was workin' alongside me. You know, he always thought that Ol' Paul was a better pitcher than me. Paul being the baby of the family," Diz philosophized, "it was only natural for him to have them sentiments."

Diz and Paul sent their father the money to make a plane trip from Houston, where he was working, to St. Louis to see the 1934 World Series games between the Cardinals and the Tigers. "Dad took a bus," Diz grinned, "because he said it was cheaper."

The father watched his two sons win the first two games against the Tigers. After the second game, he joined them in the dressing room, clapped them both on the back, and said, "I don't think I'll go on to Detroit with you. You two boys got them under control an' I'd better get on back to work."

In 1935 and 1936, Albert Dean's boys still "had 'em under control." In those two years, Diz racked up 52 wins and Paul hurled 24 victories. Paul won only five games in '36, but it looked as though Diz's talk and his performances would actually go on forever.

The axe fell on July 7, 1937, in Griffith Stadium in the city of Washington. The Great Man, Dizzy Dean, took the mound to pitch for the All-Star team of the National League against the American League.

Diz was in his glory when that ball game started. His big grin was never more in evidence as he stood up there on the mound a-foggin' them in. Until the third inning it was a close game, the sort of give-and-take competition Ol' Diz loved. With two out in the third inning, Earl

Averill came to the plate. He connected with one of Dizzy's fast balls and sent a sizzling line drive straight at the mound. It struck Diz in the left foot. He went down, got up again, his face twisted with pain.

Diz stayed in the game. He didn't know it then, but the ball had broken his big toe. He stayed in there and tried to pitch, each motion an agony. In pain, trying to keep his speed, Diz wrenched his arm on a follow-through motion. That one throw, after all of the years of heaving a baseball over cotton-field land and the smooth dirt of National League ball parks, was the throw that ruined one of the greatest pitching arms of our time. He was never the same after that one pitch.

But you couldn't keep Diz down. Without proper rest or care, with his foot still bothering him, Diz stuck out the year with the Cards and trotted dutifully to the mound every time he was summoned. But he was through, irrevocably through. He dropped from 24 wins in 1936 to a mere (for him) 13 victories in 1937.

"I know that one pitch was what did it," Dean said. "I was kiddin' myself in there after that. I didn't want to believe I was through. Maybe a rest, layin' off pitchin' might have helped. I dunno. Maybe not."

After he injured his arm, the Cards didn't keep Diz with them for very long. At the start of the 1938 season, they sold him to owner Phil Wrigley of the Chicago Cubs. Breadon got \$185,000 in cash, an outfielder, and two pitchers—one of them Curt Davis, who won 20 games for the Cardinals. It was the biggest baseball deal since 1934, when the Red Sox gave Washington \$250,000 and infielder Lyn Lary for Joe Cronin.

"I never worked for a finer man than Mr. Wrigley," Diz said. "Breadon and Rickey knew I wasn't in shape when they sold me to the Cubs. That didn't seem to matter to Mr. Wrigley. He told me, 'Diz, we're just glad to have you with us.' And he paid me as much money in three years as the Cards did in seven."

Wrigley sent Diz to Johns Hopkins and the Mayo Clinic. The doctors told Dean that he was suffering from an inflammatory condition of the deltoid muscle (near the shoulder) a stretched and inflamed muscle in the back, and a subdeltoid bursitis aggravated by a spreading sinus condition. They told Diz that he was through as a pitcher. Diz refused to quit.

How could he quit, reading what Wrigley had told newspapermen; "I am satisfied that we have purchased the game's greatest playing attraction, on or off the field. We got Dizzy's spirit, courage, and enthusiasm, in addition to his arm."

So Dizzy insisted on staying in there and pitching. He won seven games and lost only one for the Cubs in 1938. But here the records are no indication of the way he was pitching. He started many games for Charlie Grimm, games he could not finish because of the pain in his

shoulder. And the victories he did mark up were bought at a terrible price of misery, games he had to pitch on nothing but pure guts.

The Cubs won the National League pennant in 1938, the first year Diz was with them. Every player on that club will tell you that although Dizzy's right arm wasn't much help, his fight and spirit were felt. The Cubs played the Yankees for the world championship and that series brought about the most tragic moment in Dizzy Dean's career. Diz just had to pitch in that World Series. It wouldn't be right for Ol' Diz to sit on the sidelines in the Series.

For eight excruciating innings in the second game, Dizzy Dean stayed on the mound throwing them in there. With his arm aching and his speed gone, the matchless Dean held down the big bats of the Yankees. With two away in the eighth, with the Cubs leading 3-2, with only four more possible batters to face, it looked as though Diz would do the impossible, win a last World Series game and go out in a blaze of glory.

There was a Yankee on first base. Frankie Crosetti came to the plate. "Geeze," Diz said, his face suddenly sad, "a-comin' up was somethin' that was going to cause me the lowest moment in my life. I knowed my arm was gone. I couldn't break a pane of glass. But Crosetti never was a powerful hitter, so I figured I had a chance."

Crosetti hit Dizzy's first ball over the right-field fence. It sent the Yanks ahead, 4-3, and broke up the ball game. As Frankie trotted toward first base, Diz stood on the mound a beaten, tragic, hopeless, and utterly pathetic figure. But, as Crosetti rounded second, some of that wonderful, indomitable Dean spirit came back. He squared his shoulders and cupped his hands in the direction of the runner.

"Frank," Diz yelled. "I wish I could call back one year. You wouldn't get a loud foul off'n me!"

And, without breaking his stride, Crosetti called back, "Diz, you're sure right!"

There were many wet eyes in the grandstand and bleachers that day. And the Cubs on the bench couldn't bear to look at each other.

"That was the longest, most terrible ball game I've ever watched," Dizzy Dean's wife said. "That was the high and the low, watching Diz in there for eight innings with nothing but a glove and a prayer. I could see the pain on Diz's face as he threw each ball. I knew, after that game, that he was through. It was a terrible thing to know."

Diz stayed with the Cubs through 1939. He won only six games and lost four. But the Chicago fans loved him as much, if not more, than he had been idolized by the St. Louis rooters when he had been at the height of his glory. "They loved Diz not for what he did," Mrs. Dean said quietly, "but for what he tried so hard to do and couldn't."

In 1940, after eight full seasons in the major leagues, Dizzy Dean was sent down to Tulsa. A less courageous man might have bowed out then.

His overhand delivery was completely shot. But Diz still wouldn't quit. He announced that he would "learn to throw that ol' ball underarm, work up a new delivery." He and Patricia told the world that "they would be back." He went down to the Texas League, where he had started, where, as a loud and lovable kid, he had bedazzled fans with his blinding speed and sinking curves.

But the Great Man was through. No amount of toil, encouragement or prayer could restore the once powerful right arm. Ol' Diz, once the pride of the National League, just managed to break even in Tulsa, winning eight and losing eight. Recalled late in August, he won three and lost three for the Cubs. Then he was finished. That was the end of the line.

The world now knows Dizzy Dean as a successful sports announcer. Few know how he happened to get the job. It is probably the most wonderful of all the Dean stories, the most throat-catching and happy. It began during a time when Diz was at the height of his success, when his arm was still strong and he was surrounded by friends and well-wishers.

One night in 1935, Diz attended a barbecue given by the president of the Falstaff Brewing Company of St. Louis. At the affair, Diz got to talking to a young man who was suffering from infantile paralysis. During the conversation, Diz learned that the young man was, in spite of the affliction, still working. The pitcher asked him how he managed to get around.

"Friends come with me," the young man said. "They drive my car and help me in and out of places."

"Tell you what," Diz said instantly. "We ain't playin' a game tomorrow. Suppose I make the rounds with you. I kin drive and help you out some."

The next afternoon, and on several free afternoons after that, Diz turned up to drive the young man around and help out. They became fast friends. Then Diz went to the Cubs and didn't see the young man for several years. One day in 1941, the president of the Falstaff Brewing Company was meeting with the board to discuss the possibility of hiring someone to broadcast the St. Louis ball games. His son, the young man who had infantile paralysis, suddenly spoke up and said, "Dad, what about Diz? I think he'd be great."

And that was how Dizzy Dean became a sportscaster in St. Louis.

As a baseball announcer, Diz is great. Ten years after he was picked as the best pitcher and most valuable player of the year, Diz was given an award as the best baseball announcer on the air.

Becoming an announcer didn't change the Dean personality in the slightest. He brought to the mike all the color, humor, high spirits, and unpredictable type of performance that he once exhibited on the dia-

mond. His unorthodox vocal delivery, his free and easy manner, his deep love and knowledge of baseball, and the way he manhandles the King's English has earned him an amazing number of fanatical followers.

The irrepressible Dean has delighted his listeners with the casual ungrammatical, folksy Americana that once used to send players, fans, and managers into such appreciative and hysterical laughter. Ol' Diz has, for some years now, had "everything under control" up there in the broadcasting booth that overlooks the ball park.

Diz is a very bright guy and he could, if he wanted to strain and sound unnatural, tell the people about a ball game in pretty fair English. But Diz feels that people want to know what is happening in a game, that this is much more important than an announcer struggling for just the correct, descriptive word.

And let me ask you, what describes a ballplayer's action better than Diz saying, as he often has, "He slud into third base and he was throwed out." Or, "That was a foul ball, folks, an' the players has returned to their respectable bases."

Bob Hope's gag writers would have a tough time topping Dizzy when it comes to tickling his audience with a funny line. During a lull in one of the games, Diz casually remarked, "The reason I ain't pitchin' no more, folks, is because I had so much trouble with them right- and left-handed hitters."

When it comes to telling you why he speaks the way he does, Diz likes to quote a hero of his, the late Will Rogers. "Will onc't said, 'A lot of a people who don't say ain't—ain't eatin','" Diz grinned. "I'm gonna keep on sayin' ain't an' keep on eatin'."

Diz may stumble over the big words, but his picturesque language creates the sort of images that all baseball fans enjoy. A runner at first base is "out by a heifer step." A star like Ted Williams is described as "Loose Goose Williams." And when the game begins to drag, Diz talks to the people about his ranch in Texas, inviting them all down, describing it as, "A Texas penthouse, an' you know what that is, folks. That's a hog-pen with Venetian blinds."

The Great Man sometimes admits to making a *faux pas* on the air. During the war, there was a security order issued to all announcers, warning them not to mention anything about the weather conditions during, before or after a game.

"We get out to the park one day," Diz laughed, "an' it was rainin' like there was a hole in the sky. While we was waitin' for it to clear, Johnny O'Hara goes on and talks 'til he is plumb wore out. Then he turns it over to me and I go to talkin'. I let the cat outa the bag that day. I jest couldn't help it. I said, 'Folks, we can't tell you why this game is being held up, but if you'll jest sticks yer necks outa the window, you'll find out.' Boy, was that an error!"

By 1943, Diz had created a vast radio audience, particularly among the younger element of St. Louis. Then trouble began to plague him in the form of the St. Louis school teachers. These hard-working exponents of high-falutin' language became appalled by the manner in which many of their students began to express themselves. Their 10- and 12-year-olds informed teacher that a ballplayer "throwed and slud," and wouldn't be caught dead "sliding or throwing."

The teachers traced this deplorable (to them) use of English to one Jerome Herman Dean, a sports announcer who, in their opinion, was having "a simply atrocious effect in the matter of influencing the speech of our children." The teachers banded together and made a determined effort to have Dizzy Dean removed from the air.

The moppets who listened to Dean, who loved and idolized him, were terrified by the thought of never being able to hear again the voice of this great-hearted, baseball-wise gent who had been teaching them so many fascinating things about the game. The teachers were adamant.

"He is butchering the English language," they wailed. "Our children are beginning to speak the way he does."

It went all the way up to the Mayor's office.

Then Diz took the matter in his own large hands.

He went on the air one afternoon, his voice choking with emotion, and addressed the teachers of the city of St. Louis.

"All I kin say," Diz began, "is that I believe in education. I wisht that I hadda been able to get an education. But my mother died when I was three years old, an' I hadda go chop and pick cotton to make enough money fer black-eyed peas and sourbelly. I hadda work to make enough to eat on. I really wisht I coulda got an education. I woulda gone to school if I had been able."

Diz's simple speech hit the St. Louis schoolmarms where they lived. All that week, letters poured in to Dizzy, letters from teachers apologizing for the attitude they had taken, sympathizing, stating that their complaint had been withdrawn and that they would do all they could to atone for the injustice they had done to him.

"It was agreed," Diz sighed, happily, "that the teachers would learn them kids English, an' I would learn 'em baseball."

But Diz, in spite of his success at the mike, is still a pitcher first and a sports announcer second. Half the population of St. Louis lays claim to the fact that they have played in a ball game in which Ol' Diz was the pitcher. It is almost true.

Whenever Dizzy can get away from his current job, he journeys around the country playing in exhibition games, hard and soft ball. He plays on invitation, or just because he "happens to be around" where a game of baseball is being played and the greatest pitcher in the world is needed.

"Doggone," Diz said, "Pat and I will be drivin' along and I'll see a ball game and I jest have to stop the car and go to pitchin'. I jest can't seem to pass a ball game without gettin' into it."

Patricia, the pitcher's wife, will back up this statement 100 percent. The Deans live in the suburbs of St. Louis and all the kids for blocks around know the house where Dizzy Dean lives. "Along about five in the evening," Mrs. Dean said, "they ring the doorbell and ask me if Diz can come out and play ball with them. I've never known him to refuse."

And the sort of picture of Dizzy Dean to leave in your mind should be a scene in the suburbs of St. Louis. Dusk is just settling down over a sandlot and the Great Man is out there on the mound, supremely happy, surrounded by kids with stars in their eyes, waiting to swing at one of the balls he throws to them.

The big kid from the cottonfields of Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas stands in the fading light of day and pitches to the kids who are growing up in Gas House Gang town, the place where Dizzy Dean was once a supreme hero, the Great Diz. And you can bet your last dollar that while Ol' Diz is tossin' them in there to the kids, he is also telling them about how it was when the ol' arm was really right and he was standin' them National League batters on their ears.

BROWN BOMBER

The Saga of Joe Louis

By Jack Sher

THE story of Joe Louis, from Golden Gloves to a world's champion who ran out of challengers, is the story of a struggle both in and out of the ring. Under constant pressure, against great obstacles, Joe has done more for the sport of boxing than any fighter who ever laced on a glove.

And the kid from the cottonfields of Alabama and the streets of Detroit has done more to help the cause of the Negro people than any athlete in the long and bitter history of that race.

Joe has been famous a long time now. He defended his title 25 times. He put it up for every contender to poke at more times than any heavyweight champion in ring history. Joe Louis in his middle thirties is an old fighter turned promoter. It was back on June 25th, 1935, in the Yankee Stadium, that Joe smashed the massive Primo Carnera to the canvas in the sixth round and became the most talked about boxer of his generation.

All through the years, Joe made it seem easy to do the things no other champion ever had done. He made it seem like falling off a log. It wasn't easy. For over a decade Joe Louis was the champion and he had his problems and the tough decisions that went with the rank.

Shortly after the first Louis-Conn match, in June of 1941, the two fighters met outside the ring. Billy was not a beaten fighter. He told Joe he would take him next time. The two men kidded each other for a few minutes, then Conn said, "Joe, I wish I could have that title for a couple of years." "Billy," Joe said softly, "I reckon you had it for twelve rounds, and you didn't exactly know what to do with it."

Anyone who understands Louis knows he wasn't making a light joke. He was telling the man who might have become champion that the job of being champ requires keeping your head at all times, that it means a great deal of responsibility, and that it's a large load to carry.

Ever since the night he went to dreamland via Max Schmeling's thudding right, Joe always has kept his right hand high, his guard up.

Out of the ring, Joe is a very careful guy. Few white people know the champion as he really is. All they know is that Joe is a quiet man who usually seems to say the right thing. They know about the poker face, the fact that he likes to play golf. They know that he loves his mother and bought her a beautiful home in Detroit, that he was married to Marva Trotter and later was divorced. They know the superficial things about the man, but that's all.

The only time Joe Louis is completely himself is when he is among his own people. One of Joe's friends is a Negro newspaper photographer named Billy Rowe, who covered the Pacific war from Guadalcanal to Tokyo for the Pittsburgh *Courier*. "That dead-pan expression is just a front," Billy said. "Joe really lets go when he's among people with whom he is really at ease. The poker face is for the public. With us he laughs, talks his head off, has a great time. But Joe feels that his expressions in public must always be dignified and correct. Everything he does must be a credit to the position he holds and to the people he represents."

Rowe revealed that Louis has long been one of the softest touches in the fight game. Billy told of an afternoon in a Chicago hotel when more than a dozen people, white and black, drifted in and walked out with some of Joe's money in their pockets.

George Webber, Joe's bodyguard, recalled a morning when a seedy-looking man stood at the gate of Louis' training camp and yelled for the champion. Webber, sensing another touch, went out to put the chase on him.

While he was arguing with the stranger, Joe walked into view. "Hey, champ!" the man yelled. Joe strolled over. "You remember me," the man said. "I met you while you was making a tour of the Army camps, and you told me if I ever needed a job to drop around."

"I don't remember that," Joe said, "but if you say I said it, it must be true." Louis explained that there wasn't a job available, but he gave the stranger a 20-dollar bill.

There is nothing of the show-off in any of the Louis gestures. Joe simply likes people and is unusually soft-hearted about anyone who has been kicked around by life. Even the phoneyys who hang around the fight game get to Joe easily. His friends often complain bitterly and tell him he is being played for a sucker. Joe once answered such a complaint with, "Money ain't everything, unless a poor guy ain't got it."

Louis is not a cross between a pious saint and an over-enthusiastic boy scout. He has frequent spells of anger and moodiness, which only his closest friends ever see. He often resorts to highly inventive profanity, has a rugged sense of humor and a liking for gay parties, and he exercised the hero's prerogative of changing his mind so frequently in recent years he has shattered the faith some of his more ardent fans had in him.

Unlike most champions, however, Joe is modest around girls. But he

does have friends among women who have known him for a long time and are very fond of him. When Louis was training he never saw women. He liked to keep his camp calm and peaceful. He finds excitement in practical jokes.

Freddie Wilson, a constant sidekick of Joe's, ruefully remembers a joke played on him before the Farr fight. Wilson wasn't getting along with Carl Nelson, then Joe's bodyguard. Louis kept telling Freddie not to argue with Nelson because he was a tough gee from Chicago. Freddie scorned the advice and kept quarrelling with Nelson. At dinner one night, during a heated argument between Wilson and Nelson, Carl whipped out his gun and fired at Freddie. The gun had been loaded with blank cartridges by Joe and Carl. Freddie hit the floor, yelling with fright, while Joe roared at his antics.

Louis and Wilson have often teamed up as gagsters. They especially like to wire torpedoes to the sparkplugs of a car. When an unsuspecting driver steps on the starter, he thinks his engine is exploding. Freddie once told Louis he had wired the car of a man who had heart trouble, then watched gleefully as Joe hot-footed it down the road to warn the man. "I was just kidding," Wilson laughed, "but I never saw Joe move so fast. He was really worried."

Joe liked joking about everything except the way he looked in training. He always looked slow during the first few weeks. Once, during a sparring session before the second Conn fight, a ringside fan kept heckling Joe. The champ was sparring with a first-rate fighter named Al Hoosman, a big clever guy, who was getting the better of the exchanges. Louis suddenly jerked his head toward the heckler and said sharply, "Give that man his money back and get him out of here."

After the session, Joe was asked if he was really sore at the heckler. He grinned and explained that he was trying to concentrate on what he was doing in the ring and the man had bothered him. "I guess I was sore at him," Joe said. "Now I ain't. I know I look bad in there, but I'll sharpen up."

When the chips were down and Joe was fighting for his title, nothing anyone said in or out of the ring made him explode. It was tried by experts. Conn tried it in their first fight and some of the things he said were way below the belt. But after the eighth round Conn was so impressed by the clean way Louis was fighting that he closed his mouth.

However, Louis has not been free from attacks of over-confidence and sloppy preparation for a fight. Twice he suffered the dire effects of presuming too much before he climbed into the ring. And both times he profited by the experience.

He was cocky before the first bout with Max Schmeling, and the German gave him an unmerciful pounding for 12 rounds. The return match is, of course, one of the highlights of boxing history. Driven by a deep

hatred for his opponent and a determination to vindicate himself, Joe knocked Schmeling senseless within three minutes.

Before the first match with Jersey Joe Walcott in December, 1947, Louis, heavier and slower than he'd ever been before, made the mistake of misjudging his opponent as another innocuous challenger and overestimating his own strength. Joe carried his indifference into the ring and barely escaped with the crown on his head.

Six months later, Joe met Walcott again with a great deal of prestige, as well as his title, at stake. Although Louis didn't attack Walcott with the same savage fury he had displayed against Schmeling 10 years before, he was able to prove to himself and the public that he had enough of the old poise and punch left to turn back the best challenge the world had to offer at that time. It was his last fight.

Louis has never been called a great ring general. While Jack Blackburn was alive, Joe let the old trainer plan his fights and followed instructions from the corner.

Early in his career, Joe was most dangerous during the first minute and a half of any round. At the clang of the bell, with Blackburn's words still fresh in his ears, Louis would fight old Jack's way. Fighters who have stayed on their feet with Louis for 15 rounds did it by keeping away from him at the beginning of each round. As the round wore on, Joe had a habit of forgetting Blackburn's instructions.

An old-time sportswriter told me that Joe differed from most fighters in that every punch he landed always hurt. "Most fighters are so keyed up when they go into the ring," he explained, "that they don't feel the majority of the punches until after the fight. But no matter how toned up an opponent was, Joe's jabs and hooks always hurt."

George Nicholson, who for many years was Louis' chief sparring partner, explained to me that Joe's body and arms were always relaxed until the second before he landed a punch. "Just before he landed," Nick said, "he tightened up and, as the blow connected, he twisted his wrist just slightly. It was a corkscrew punch." Nick grinned, adding, "And it hurt."

The cold calmness of Louis in the ring, Nicholson will tell you, was more physical than emotional. Blackburn trained Joe in the "relaxed" method of fighting, and if he tightened up, he lost a great deal of effectiveness.

The only time Louis ever got excited in the ring was the minute before the opening bell of the second Schmeling fight. It worried Nick and Louis' handlers at ringside. They didn't know what might have happened if Joe had been forced to maintain the murderous pace he set himself in that first round.

"He was fighting mad that night," Nick recalled. "That was the first and only time I've ever seen him mean mad. He was that way for two days before the fight. He wouldn't speak to anyone; he'd just grunt

when you asked him a question. I was afraid he was going to kill Schmeling. That," Nick added with a grin, "was before it was legal to kill Nazis."

After the second Schmeling fight, there was a period when sports-writers and fans thought of Joe as a killer, a grudge fighter. Joe Louis forgot about Schmeling for keeps the second the German hit the canvas. It is difficult for Louis to carry a grudge against anyone. He is a man without enemies and that's an amazing thing in the clouting business.

Even more unusual is the fact that Joe Louis was never in love with fighting as a profession. "Well, I guess this fight game's all right," Joe once said, "but I can't say I like it. It's the way I got to make a living."

Joe never hit an opponent in the ring as hard as he could hit. He says he never had and never would hit a man with all his power. When asked about Schmeling, he laughed and said, "Well, I hit him pretty hard, at that. But not my hardest."

In his eighth fight as a pro, Louis got the fright of his life. He was fighting Art Sykes at the Arcadia Gardens in Chicago on October 24, 1934. Sykes, a big clever fighter, went down in the eighth round when Joe hooked him with a hard left hand and followed with a crashing right.

Back in his dressing room, Louis was told that Sykes still was unconscious. A half hour went by and Art still was out. Joe began to sweat. He told Blackburn that if anything happened to Sykes he was through with the ring. Since then, with the exception of Schmeling, the fear of injuring a man seriously or fatally has plagued Louis.

The average fight fan knows little about Joe Louis' career before he cut down Primo Carnera in 1935. As an amateur, Joe fought 54 times, won 43 bouts by knockouts, seven by decisions, and lost four.

After turning professional on Independence Day, in 1934, Big Joe fought 22 times before climbing through the ropes to face Carnera, chalking up 18 KO wins. He met very few set-ups. Men like Lee Ramage, Natie Brown, Roy Lazer, Alex Borchuk, Adolph Wiater, and Charlie Massera either were clever or rugged, or both.

Two of the roughest fights Joe Louis ever had rarely have been mentioned by sportswriters. The first, in 1934, against a chunky hard-hitting Canadian boy, Alex Borchuk, proved that Joe could take it.

In the third round Borchuk caught Joe with a right hand flush to the button. When Louis went back to his corner he thought all his teeth had been knocked out. An examination showed one of them had been broken. "Nobody since then," Louis said, "has ever hit me so hard." Joe didn't take any more chances with Alex. He dropped him for the final count in the next round.

Following the Borchuk fight, Louis took on Adolph Wiater, the only fighter who ever sent blood flowing down Joe's face. He flattened Ad in

the first round, but Wiater got up and came into him, smashing away with both hands. In the fifth, Wiater bloodied Joe's nose and hammered away at him unceasingly. Louis took everything the big blond boy threw at him, steadied in the seventh, and went on to win the fight by a wide margin.

With the exception of the first crushing defeat by Max Schmeling, Louis says that the Borchuk and Wiater fights were the two most punishing ring battles of his career. For these two fights he was paid a total of \$306. Less than four years later, he had slammed his way to the top of the ring and had boffed the cash register for a merry \$1,384,034.

Big Joe, the man behind the bazooka punch, was not born to be a fighter. The only inheritance Joe Louis had in common with most boys who go into the ring was poverty.

He was born on a farm near Lexington, Alabama, on May 13, 1914. He weighed 14 pounds and was the seventh child of Monroe and Lillie Barrow. Joe's arrival was not greeted with joy. The Barrows, working a 120-acre tract of rocky soil, were hungry most of the time. The kids were one jump ahead of the rickets.

It has been written that Joe was a sleepy child. He was. Sleep is a refuge from hunger. Joe got his first licking for eating food he was supposed to carry to workers in the field.

The Negro people of Buckalew Mountain are among the poorest in the state. Their lives are made up of three things—heat, hardship, and hunger. Joe doesn't like to speak of his early childhood. "Maybe it was okay for me," he said ironically, "but it sure wasn't for my mother."

Joe's father, a giant of a man, worked and worried himself into the state insane asylum while Joe was still a child. The burden of caring for the family was left on the sturdy shoulders of toil-hardened Lillie Barrow.

Joe Louis always has given most of the credit for his success to his mother. There is no person in the world he loves as much. As a young woman, Lillie Barrow could outwork most of the men in the community. She plowed and cut cord wood with tireless energy. She minded her children carefully, kept them straight and honest, gave them a trust in God and courage, humility, and pride. "My children were good," she says today. "I tried my best to keep my Joe always good. He listened to me, he always obeyed what I said."

For a long time Joe was regarded as a phenomenon in the sports world because he never seemed to say or do anything wrong. Harry Mendel, former manager of Tony Galento, once remarked, "That Galento did everything wrong, and this guy does everything right. It's hard to understand how a fighter can be such a good guy."

Subsequently, however, Joe slipped from under the halo. His decline in popularity dates from the first Walcott fight which many people felt

he lost. His ill-advised tour through England and his poor performance in the ring cost him additional admirers.

And the frequency with which he changed his mind about retiring brought him closer to the level of a more human, ordinary champion than he had been before. But only in contrast with his early reign as heavyweight king when he was a model ruler, did Joe appear to be a less shining example of the perfect champion. Compared to most titleholders, his conduct, in and out of the ring, was exemplary.

Much has been made of Joe Louis' "mixed ancestry." A great many people have done exhaustive research on the subject, including Ernest A. Hooten, professor of anthropology at Harvard University. The plain fact, as Joe will tell you, is that he is an American Negro. It is true that there is white and Indian stock in his ancestry, but that is so with the majority of Negroes in America.

In his early youth, Louis met as much discrimination because of his color as most of his people have. And yet, Louis has risen above hatred on a personal basis.

Although not as much at ease with white people as among Negroes, Joe treats those with white skin as squarely as he does members of his own race.

When Joe bought his huge farm at Spring Hill, Michigan, there was an aged white couple living on the land. Hearing that a Negro had bought the farm, they were afraid they would have to leave. Word of this reached Joe in New York and he immediately went all the way to Spring Hill to tell the old people they could go on living there as long as they wished.

Manny Seamon, Joe's white trainer, who took the job after the death of Blackburn, might have had trouble with any fighter but Joe Louis. "Look at it this way," Manny said. "Joe was practically raised in the ring by Jack Blackburn. As a Negro, Jack could understand many of Joe's problems better than I could ever hope to. And yet, Joe never has treated me with any less warmth and respect than he treated Blackburn. I would rather be known as the trainer and friend of Joe Louis than any other fighter in the world."

The Negro families on Madison Avenue in Detroit, where Lillie Barrow moved after her marriage to Pat Brooks, lived a squalid life. It was a tenement section, a place of dark, musty hallways, garbage-littered streets, kids in ragged clothing and bare feet. It was a neighborhood of gangs, street fighting, and crime.

As a kid, Joe Louis was one of the few boys in his group who never got into serious trouble. He fought only when attacked. He went obediently, if reluctantly, to school.

At the age of 12, he took a part-time job, delivering ice, at one dollar a week. The dollar meant a great deal to his mother, who had been

forced to accept help from the Detroit Welfare Board in order to keep her family going. The Board paid \$269 to them over a period of seven months, and it just about kept them alive.

In 1935, with the money from his first large purse in his hand, Joe Louis paid it back. Joe never forgets his debts nor has he ever forgotten the kids who grew up with him on Madison Avenue and Mullick Street in Detroit.

Probably his oldest friend is Holman Williams. It was Williams who introduced Joe to boxing gloves. One afternoon a couple of years ago, he told me about Joe while we stood outside the ring at Pompton Lakes, watching Louis work out.

"Big Joe was my best pal," he said. "The kids in the neighborhood never messed around with him. They found out that Joe could take care of himself and they let him alone. I never saw Joe start a fight with anybody. Like it is now, most everybody liked Joe. He never said much, but what he said was always right. It may sort of sound like I say this because I'm Joe's friend, but he was always for the little guy. It's the same way here in camp, ask anybody. He's always for the underdog in any of the arguments we have around here. Joe has a big heart."

Williams stopped for a moment. He watched Louis and Al Hoosman pumping away at each other in the ring. "See him up there fighting? I remember when we was amateurs together. I remember when he was knocked down seven times in one fight and kept right on going in to take it. But when I first knew him he didn't want to become a fighter. After he lost three fights in a row, then he comes to me and says he is sure that someday he'll be a good fighter. Joe is the kind of guy who gets going the best when things are the toughest."

After Louis took that terrible pasting from Max Schmeling in their first fight, a lot of people jumped off the Brown Bomber's bandwagon. Not Holman Williams. After the fight, Williams told everyone who would listen that Joe Louis was going to become the next world's heavy-weight champion. He remembered how Joe was in the old days when the going got rough.

The Williams' back yard was the scene of the first sparring matches between Joe and Holman. After a workout they would head for the kitchen where Mrs. Williams fed them cookies. Joe had a hankering to become a ballplayer. "You don't want to do that," Williams would tell him. "A colored ballplayer has the cards stacked against him. He just can't get to the top." "But I don't like to fight much," Joe would answer, "except for fun."

How to make a living was Joe's biggest problem then. He often talked to Williams about his family's struggle to get along.

School also bothered him. He was the biggest boy in his class at Detroit's Duffield School. The teachers remember him as a slow student,

blaming his backwardness on poor grounding in fundamentals during the short periods he went to school in Alabama.

Joe plugged along until he reached the seventh grade, then switched to the Bronson Vocational School. When his mother bought him a violin and urged him to take lessons, Joe couldn't make any headway. "I was a sorry kid, then," Louis said. "There just didn't seem to be any way I could help the family or myself."

Williams never stopped encouraging Joe to take up fighting. Many pounds lighter than Louis and much faster, Holman would hammer away at him. He couldn't hurt Joe much and Louis never hurt him. Most of the punches Louis threw were more of a push than a blow. Now and again, he would show a slight interest in trying to strike a fast blow at his friend, but most of the time he was half-hearted about it.

Many years later, in September, 1935, Joe Louis had bowled over Max Baer to become the number one contender for the heavyweight crown. He went to St. Louis to appear at the light-heavyweight championship match between Bob Olin and John Henry Lewis. Joe was to referee a prelim. When Louis saw who the two preliminary fighters were, he withdrew as referee. One of them was Holman Williams.

"He told me afterwards," Williams said, "that he didn't think it would be fair for him to be the third man in the ring. He said those cookies my ma used to give him might have counted against my opponent. That's Joe. He just can't do anything unfair."

Although Holman Williams was an influence on Joe Louis' life, there was a young Negro lightweight named Thurston McKinney, who started Joe on his career as an amateur fighter. McKinney, who had been one of Joe's classmates at school, was then the amateur lightweight champion of Michigan. He belonged to a small athletic club located in the Brewster Community Center.

Searching for a sparring partner, McKinney saw Joe walking slowly down a street with his violin under his arm. Louis was on his way to take a lesson, but McKinney could talk as well as he could fight. An hour later, the violin lay on the floor and Joe was lacing on the gloves.

For several rounds, Thurston cuffed Louis around at will. Then he uncorked a looping, sizzling hook to his friend's jaw. Big Joe momentarily lost his temper and let fly a hard right hand punch. McKinney's eyes went glassy, his knees buckled and, if Louis hadn't caught him, he would have dropped to the floor. Joe apologized. McKinney grinned weakly and looked at Joe with admiration.

From then on, like Williams, McKinney constantly pecked away at Joe to take up boxing seriously. Louis hung around the Brewster gym for nine months, acting as a punching bag for other fighters. Kid Ellis, the club's trainer, saw little promise in the big, shy, often clumsy fighter. Joe Louis couldn't even make the boxing team.

A new instructor, George Moody, gave Joe his first chance in the ring. Watching Joe spar with Charlie House, the middleweight champion of the club, Moody decided to make room for Joe on the team. He took him along when the club's fighters met the Edison A. C. team. It wasn't exactly a favor. Louis was the victim of a bad mismatch.

In November, 1932, with Williams and McKinney on the sidelines, Big Joe fought his first official fight. In the opposite corner was Johnny Miller, a seasoned light-heavyweight, holder of the city and state championships and member of the Olympic boxing team.

The announcer walked over to Joe's corner. "Your name Joe Louis Barrow?" The young fighter thought it over. "Just Joe Louis," he answered.

Joe Louis walked out of the Edison A. C. that night a badly defeated fighter. The side of his face was swollen, his lips puffed, his body sore from punches that had connected solidly. In the first two rounds Miller smacked the future heavyweight champ to the canvas seven times. Joe kept going back for more.

Both Williams and McKinney, watching the fight, were certain that Big Joe's career as a fighter was washed up. But on the way home Louis told Williams: "I sure got licked, but I'm gonna be a fighter, Willie. I learned plenty in there tonight." He turned his battered face to his friend. "I guess that man used up about all his punches on me."

Joe's mother took a look at her son's condition and said nothing. Her face told him everything. All through his amateur career, she objected to Joe's fighting, but she seldom spoke about it. The merchandise and food checks he was given for his fights, he brought home to her.

After his defeat by Miller, Joe went to work in earnest. He hammered out 13 straight knockouts. But his fists weren't earning the money his family needed, so he covered the city, looking for a job.

In 1933, Joe went to work on the assembly line at the Ford plant for \$25 a week. It was the most money he had earned in his life and, for several months, he was happy about the job and convinced he should quit the ring.

One day a friend showed Joe a check he had received for a pro fight. It was twice as much as Joe made in a week. That was early in 1934 and Joe had been fighting two years as an amateur. He lost to Max Marek in 1933 for the amateur light-heavyweight title and dropped close decisions to Clinton Bridges and Stanley Evans. But in April of 1934, after a string of impressive victories, Louis won the amateur light-heavyweight title he missed the year before. He felt ready.

When Joe told his mother that he wanted to quit the job at Ford and fight professionally, she became panicky. It was probably the only time that they ever had words about Joe's career in the ring. The \$25 a week Joe earned meant security for the family.

In the kitchen, surrounded by her other children, Mrs. Brooks pointed this out to her son. "Joe never talked much before," his mother said later, "but he sure talked aplenty that night. He had thought it all out, and I could see his mind was made up. He tried to tell me, the best that he could, that what he was doing was for us. I knew then that it wasn't 'cause he loved fightin' but 'cause he loved us that he wanted to fight for money."

In or out of the ring, Joe seldom makes snap decisions. He carried the problem around with him for days. He finally took it to John Roxborough, a wealthy Detroit lawyer, who had helped his career as an amateur and who also had been instrumental in getting Joe a job in the Ford factory.

Roxy listened carefully to Joe's slow explanation of his problem, which ended with, "Mr. Roxborough, what I'm gettin' is a lot of money and it helps my ma. But some of the boys at the gym tell me they make 25 dollars for one fight. Do you think I could get that much?"

Roxborough looked at the big, worried, 19-year-old boy, who had won 43 amateur fights by knockouts. "Joe," he said, "you're awfully young. You're a great amateur and have a fine future. I don't think you should turn pro now. But," Roxy smiled, "if you need money as badly as you say you do, go ahead and do it. You can get \$25 for a fight. If you work hard and make good, I'll see that you get much more than that."

So began Joe's friendship with the fatherly, intelligent, worldly Negro, who was to become his manager.

Much has been written about John Roxborough as the power behind Joe's rise to the championship. A graduate of Detroit University's Law School, a successful lawyer and real estate man, he was a leader of his people in Detroit. Unfortunately, he also was mixed up in the policy racket, which eventually caught up with him.

Proof of Joe's deep affection and respect for Roxborough is found in the fact that Louis brought John right back into the fold after he was released from prison.

Roxborough and his partner, Julian Black, knew what they were taking on when they set out to boost Joe Louis to the top of the fight game. The world didn't want a Negro heavyweight champion.

From 1908 to 1915, a colored man named Jack Johnson, as heavyweight champion of the world, did more to harm the Negro people than all the untruths printed about them. The late Jack Johnson has been given his lumps by sportswriters for years. It is useless to recount his mistakes on these pages, other than to add that the fight game has produced white champions equally as bad. But a Negro in the public eye carries the reputation of his race on his shoulders. It would take quite a man to undo the harm done by Johnson.

Harry Wills, a fine man and a great fighter, was unable to win the heavyweight title because he was a Negro. Jack Dempsey wouldn't fight him. After the reign of Jack Johnson, colored fighters met bitter hostility. They were handed bad decisions. Hatred against Negroes, writes the young Negro journalist Roi Ottley, hung over the ring like a pall. It was so real a handicap that only the most stout-hearted overcame it.

In the early '20's and '30's, colored fighters were pushed into the dregs of the fight game. They were forced to throw fights, take short purses, and serve as punching bags and clowns. Fight fans couldn't forget Jack Johnson.

Jack Blackburn, who was one of the finest fighting machines ever to step into the ring, was hired to train Joe Louis. Blackburn, a man of strict honesty, told the partners that Louis would only bring them misery. "Nobody can get a colored heavyweight to the top," Blackburn said gloomily. "That Joe is too good a boy to put through that hell. It'll break his heart."

"It will take some doing," Roxborough said, "but we'll show everyone in the world how good Joe is. We'll make the public want him to win the championship, if he's good enough to win it."

Blackburn showed a twisted smile. "He's good," he said. "He has punch, heart, just about everything, Mr. Roxborough. I never seen a boy learn so quick. He never makes a mistake twice."

The trio, Blackburn, Roxborough and Black, planned Joe's career the way generals plan a long-term campaign. They picked the men he would fight and where he would fight them. They gave him no set-ups. They didn't, as has been said so often, tell Joe what to think, say and do on every occasion. Joe thinks for himself. They had a boy who couldn't be bad, who was good with his fists and heart, when he came to them.

Actually, Roxborough had only one serious talk with Joe Louis. That was the night before Joe won his first professional fight against Jack Kracken in the Bacon Casino in Chicago. Roxborough outlined for Joe the course of action they had decided upon.

There would be no double dealing, no fixing of fights, no soft "build up" matches. Joe would fight fair at all times. He would never gloat over a win. He would keep a dead pan. He would live and fight clean.

Roxy then outlined the difficulties and prejudices Joe would face. "It's a long, hard struggle," Roxy said, "and maybe there will be nothing at the end, Joe. Do you still want to try it?" Joe said only two words, "Yes, sir."

After the Conn fight, Joe spoke over the air to the two people he loves most, his mother and John Roxborough. Although it is illegal for a man who has served a prison sentence to manage a fighter in the ring, Joe found a way to get Roxy at his side again.

Lou Krem, Joe's commanding officer in the army, likes to tell stories

about the influence Joe has on all kinds of people. Louis once visited a stockade full of prisoners, American soldiers in the guardhouse for misconduct. "When Joe walked into that big roomful of men," Krem said, "you could have heard a pin drop. Then he began to talk to them in that slow, deliberate way he has. I've never heard a speech like that. He told them that their uniforms weren't the ones the Army had given them. He said, as a soldier, he was ashamed of them. Then he told them about a mistake he had made. He said he had thought he was a big shot before the first Schmeling fight. He said he forgot, for a time, how many people depended on him. He ended by pointing out to them that he had fixed that mistake in the second Schmeling fight and that they could fix their mistakes, too.

"Now, those guys listening to him were tough characters," Krem said. "He was taking an awful chance talking to them that way. But you could tell by their faces that what Joe said hit home. I'm telling you right now that Joe Louis is a great man and a great American. I went to school at Notre Dame and I knew Knute Rockne. Until I met Joe, I never met a sports figure that measured up to Rock. Joe does."

Krem traveled all over with Louis and another of his favorite stories concerns a golf match they played in Edmonton, Canada. When they finished the eighteenth hole, a crowd of spectators gathered and asked Joe and Lou to play two more holes.

"Joe's a hell of a good golfer," Lou said. "He shoots in the low 80's, which is way out of my class. I got him aside and told him I didn't want to make a fool of myself. My second shot on the first hole lit in a big trap. Joe's drive carried to the edge of the green. He lit out, way ahead of the crowd, going fast. As he passed my ball, he scooped it out of the trap with his club. It was lying pretty when I got there. That was a swell thing to do and I asked him why he did it.

"Aw, hell, Lou," he grinned, "we were just playing for fun. No use your getting embarrassed in front of all them people."

It has been said that Joe's fairness in the ring was an attempt to win the admiration of the fans and scribes. Those who saw the first Conn fight know differently. Billy cursed Louis for nine rounds, deliberately heeled him, and was ahead on points. Joe saw his championship slipping away.

In the 10th round, whirling out of a corner, Conn slipped. For several breathless seconds he was wide open. Louis, without violating a rule, could have knocked Billy senseless. Instead, he stepped back and let Billy regain his stance.

Louis started out as a pro in the ring with just two assets. He had a powerhouse punch in both hands and a natural rhythm in his movements. Until Louis was belted out by the steadily connecting right hand of Max Schmeling, he hadn't needed much of a defense. Joe knew just one thing in his early days of fighting—go in and sock.

A sportswriter named Bill McCormick was one of the first to have his eyes opened by the speed and punch of Blackburn's Bomber. Bill had a piece of a highly touted scrapper named Buck Everett. Buck had a long series of winning fights behind him and seemed to be on the way up. "I figured," McCormick laughed, "that I had my hands on a good thing in Everett. All I knew about Louis was that he was a new fighter with only four matches behind him. I couldn't figure out why his managers had agreed to let him go against a veteran like Everett.

"Before Louis had thrown half a dozen punches I turned to another party who had a piece of Everett and said, 'There's the next champion of the world.' My friend told me I was crazy and said to watch Buck get going in the next round. In the next round I watched Buck throw a punch, saw Joe's hand move and watched Everett hit the deck. I went back to writing about sports and from then on followed Louis' career."

McCormick was one of the first sportswriters who really made an effort to know Joe and write about him as something other than the "dark menace" or the "automaton" or the "inscrutable, unemotional fighting machine."

McCormick recalled a trip to Joe's camp just before the historic Louis-Baer fight. Max had been talking a great fight against Louis and also had been making some tactless remarks about Joe's fiancée, Marva Trotter. "Joe," McCormick said, "Baer tells me he's going to rough you up in this fight."

Joe smiled, but there was a mean twinkle in his eyes. "No, he won't," he answered. "He ain't crazy." "Should I tell him that?" McCormick asked. "No, Mr. McCormick," Louis said. "You just tell Baer he can say what he wants about me, but he better stop talking about Miss Trotter, because it's making me want to hurt him."

Bill relayed the information to Baer, who became somewhat subdued. As the date of the fight drew near, Baer's windy bravado grew softer. The reports from Joe's camp did not bolster his courage. One of Louis' sparring partners, reporting the Brown Bomber in the pink, said, "Any place he hits you, you think you are shot. And if he hits you right, you think you're dead."

If Louis had carried the grudge against Baer into the ring, Max might have taken a worse shellacking than he did. But Joe was humane enough to get Max out of the way in four rounds. Even so, Baer took a severe pounding. After the fight, Max grinned through a puffed and battered face, saying, "Sure I could have gotten up the last time. Twenty bucks entitles these people to see a fight. It don't entitle them to see a murder."

After the rout of Baer in the ring, Joe joined Marva Trotter, whom he had married a few hours before the fight. There have been many stories about the marriage, how it happened, and why it failed.

Joe first met Marva when he was an amateur fighter in 1933. They met in a gymnasium. Marva came because Joe was something of a celebrity in Detroit's amateur fight circles. They were introduced by a sports fan and a friend of Marva's, Jerry Hughes.

Class differences in Negro society are as marked as in white society. Marva was society. Joe was a pug and a factory worker. It is interesting that Miss Trotter did not marry Joe Louis until he was well in the chips and on the brink of becoming the world's champion.

At the time of their marriage, Joe was not Marva's equal from the standpoint of cultural advantages and education, but he was her equal in more material ways.

Marva has been blamed for Joe's defeat in his first fight with Schmeling. It isn't true. Before that fight, Joe and Marva were happy. For Marva, Joe meant fame and glamour. Joe apparently was very much in love with her. But as time wore on and Joe's fame skyrocketed, more of his attention had to be turned toward being a public figure.

Joe and his wife furnished a beautiful apartment in Chicago, in which Marva spent a great deal of time—alone.

Joe was pushing a golf ball around a course shortly after putting Conn on ice for the first time when he was notified that Marva was suing for divorce. They were reconciled in the courtroom and took their marriage on for a few more rounds. But the long separations and the lack of mutual interests proved to be obstacles they couldn't overcome. Since 1945, they have been through divorce, remarriage, separations, reconciliations, and law suits. They have two children, a daughter Jacqueline, and a son, Joe Jr.

Probably the happiest period in Joe's life was the time between the Baer fight and the first Schmeling bout. Everything he had fought so hard for—27 fights in two and a half years—was his. He had bought his mother a beautiful new home and provided for his brothers and sisters. One of his sisters, Vunies, he sent to one of the best Negro colleges in the country. His home life was fairly serene. He had earned over a million dollars and had lived up to the expectations of his manager.

Joe trained for the Schmeling fight like a kid on an outing. Only Blackburn, who had seen so many of them come and go, was worried. Jack's own career had been ruined after he won fame against such great fighters as Joe Gans and Sam Langford. Now he saw the 22-year-old Golden Boy of the ring making the greatest mistake of his life. Joe was over-confident.

As one of his close friends, a Negro sportswriter, said, "... he began to believe the press clippings." He was too contented to train rigorously. He was riding the crest. He was the big kid who had grabbed the brass ring in his crashing fists.

On June 19, 1936, ten years before the night of the second Conn

fight, Joe Louis climbed into the ring against Max Schmeling, favored to win by a KO before the third round.

You know what happened that night. The Black Uhlan's big right fist seemed to work like a magnet toward Joe's jaw and the side of his head. Time after time the blows crashed through. In the fourth round, Schmeling's Sunday punch connected. Big Joe went down. He was hurt, dazed. Blackburn shouted frantically for Joe to take the nine-count. "Stay down, Chappie!"

Joe never heard him. He staggered to his feet. His hands went up and he fought by instinct. He was so dazed by Max's powerful shots that he thought he heard a bell that never rang. He dropped his hands. Schmeling smashed him flush on the button. Joe's legs bent. He crouched in pain. The bell rang and he staggered to his corner like a man in a nightmare.

For eight more rounds, Joe Louis paid the price of over-confidence, sloppy training, not listening to Blackburn. Joe had dished it out in the ring. That night he took it. He took it and came back for more. He seemed to want to pay for his mistake. He took it the way he had when he had been knocked down seven times in his first fight with Miler. In the 12th round it ended. A series of savage lefts and rights from the viciously punching Schmeling sent Joe to the canvas for keeps.

Failure to train correctly wasn't the only thing that beat Big Joe that night. Schmeling beat him. Max, unknown to almost everyone, studied motion pictures of Joe in training. He knew every movement Louis made in the ring. He knew Joe's two weakest points. Joe always carried his guard low, leaving his jaw open. And he had a definite way of feinting with his left hand to find an opening.

Max knew that feint. He knew just how often and how far out Joe would reach with that left hand before throwing a punch. All Max had to do was beat him to the punch with a right.

Early in the fight, Jack Blackburn saw what Schmeling was doing. But he couldn't change Joe's style. Years of making Louis an offensive instead of a defensive fighter could not be changed in the heat of battle. Joe would come out of his corner with Blackburn's instructions to keep his guard high. Then, by force of habit, he would drop it. When he dropped it, Max banged in the right.

Schmeling was a cunning, well-conditioned fighter that night. He made no mistakes. Max waited until he was out of the ring to make his mistake. But he made a beaut. He made the worst mistake he could make against a man like Joe Louis. Max was a poor winner. He gloated in victory.

In typical Nazi fashion, Schmeling boasted that, because he was a white man, he knew he could beat a colored man. He accused the groggy Louis of hitting him low. He called Joe an amateur.

Like Hitler hopping in glee over the fall of France, Schmeling read telegrams of congratulations from Goebbels and the Fuehrer himself and muttered a "Heil Hitler" into the microphone in his dressing room. He boasted that he was going to get back the championship; that he would carry it home to the Fatherland.

Joe Louis, his face covered with ice packs, lay on a dressing table down the hall. That night he was one of the most lost and lonely men in America. He said little, except to tell the sportswriters he was sorry he let them down. He asked Roxborough if he had hit Schmeling low. Yes, in his dazed state, he had hit Schmeling low twice.

"Tell him," Joe said painfully, "that I'm sorry. I don't want to foul nobody. I don't know what I did in there." Blackburn came over and rubbed Big Joe's shoulder. "Take it easy, Chappie," he said. "This ain't your last fight. You jes' got tagged. We'll be back."

Louis hit the comeback trail with a vengeance. Two months later, he climbed into the ring against Jack Sharkey, the man who had once whipped Max Schmeling to win the heavyweight title. It was a different Joe Louis. He carried his right hand high, covering his chin. He was businesslike and cold. Sharkey couldn't even touch Louis that night. Big Joe belted him down the pike in the third round.

One year and three days later, 10 fights later, with nine knockout victories behind him, Joe Louis had worked his way to a shot at the championship of the world. The title hopes that had crashed on June 19, 1936, were now his to shoot at.

For 22 years, since 1915, the Negro people had been waiting for one of their race to regain the title which Jack Johnson lost so ignominiously to Jess Willard that day Johnson lay in the ring in Havana, Cuba, with his hand over his eyes to shade them from the sun.

The champion was James J. Braddock. He was a champion only in spirit. He had won the title in a dogged, uninspired bout with the clownish, poorly conditioned Max Baer.

Jim Braddock deserved the title he won. He was washed up as a fighter before 1929. His jaw had been broken, his ribs fractured. He had been defeated 29 times and he and his family were on relief when Jim Braddock went back to fighting.

It was ironic and wonderful, the picture that existed the night Joe Louis faced Jim Braddock for the most exalted ring title in the world. Both men had once been on relief. Both had worked as laborers. Both had tasted poverty, hunger and defeat.

To them, fighting was the only way to prove themselves. One was a once-broken man, who had risen by sheer courage to the top of the heap. The other was a young, 23-year-old Negro boy, a member of the most exploited race in the nation, who had fought his way up from the second rate gyms of Detroit.

Braddock lost the title like a champion to a champion. He knocked Joe down in the second round. From then on, Jim took a beating. He fought gamely, but was completely outclassed and, in the eighth round, the big right hand of Joe Louis shot out to end the slaughter. Joe was the champion of the world.

A little guy named Joe Gould, Jim Braddock's manager, said in the dressing room after the fight, "Well, we lost, but I'm proud of Jim. Joe Louis is a good boy. Joe has done more to bring boxing back than anyone in the game today. He deserves to be champion."

Joe Louis told the reporters that anybody who wanted a crack at the title could have it. He also said he wouldn't consider himself really the champion until he had beaten Max Schmeling. He wanted Max bad. But he was taking on all comers until the Schmeling fight could be arranged.

No champion in the world put his title on the line as fast as Joe. Two months after he won it, he let Tommy Farr, the game and rugged Welshman, try for it. Farr took a lot of healthy pokes at it, traveling the full 15-round route. Joe showed fight fans he knew how to box that night. He looked classy.

Against Nathan Mann and Harry Thomas, whom he KO'd, he looked rough and sharp. He was tuning up for *Herr Max*. Schmeling arrived in America with the hope of the Nazi world behind him. Hitler wanted the title as badly as Max did. The German mailed fist was closing to throw a staggering punch at the world.

The theory of racial superiority was up for test. Max came across the water with his mouth open, spouting disdain for Louis, for America's "decadent" democracy. He told reporters what he would do to the "black amateur."

Jack Blackburn summed up Joe's attitude. A week before the fight he said grimly, "Chappie would rather die than lose this one. He's gonna get that man. He promised me."

Joe had promised someone else, too. Just before going into training, Louis paid a visit to a man who had done a great deal for Joe's people. Sitting behind a desk at the White House, Franklin D. Roosevelt turned his warm smile on Joe. They chatted for a few minutes and the President grinned as he felt the Louis biceps.

"Joe," the President said, "when the cause is right, an American never loses."

"I won't let you down, Mr. President," Joe replied.

Joe Louis hit Max Schmeling 41 times on the night of June 22, 1938. He hit him most of those times with the right hand that Max had held in contempt. He hit him with his shoulders behind every punch. In that fight he fought the way Dempsey fought, like a killer.

The first Louis blow, a left hook to Schmeling's jaw, landed four sec-

onds after the bell rang. Officially, Schmeling went down four times before the final count. He was knocked out in two minutes and four seconds of the first round. It was the fastest and most vicious knockout in the history of world championship fights.

Schmeling, who had called Big Joe a "dumb animal," ended the fight on all fours. A white towel from his corner fluttered past him. He was taken from the stadium to a hospital.

In defeat, Schmeling claimed a foul. The sportswriters were unanimous in agreeing that Louis did not land a foul shot in any of the 41 punches. Max took one on the short ribs, when twisting to get away from a cannonlike right Joe had aimed for the body. It was a fair punch. Max couldn't lose any better than he could win.

Many of the names you may have forgotten, but for the record here are the men who might have become champions of the world except for Joe's powerful rights and lefts: John Henry Lewis, Tony Galento, Jack Roper, Bob Pastor, Arturo Godoy, Johnny Paychek, Al McCoy, Red Burman, Gus Dorazio, Abe Simon, Tony Musto, Max Baer's kid brother, Buddy, Billy Conn, Lou Nova, Tami Mauriello, and Joe Walcott.

Big Joe became such a symbol of the word "champion" that people paid not to see whether he would win or lose—they knew he would win—but just to see Joe Louis.

Before the first Conn fight, Joe defended his title once a month for seven months. Writers termed it a "bum of the month" campaign. Most of the challengers were capable heavyweights but not in the same class with Louis as boxers or punchers.

Billy Conn, in his first fight against Louis, proved to be in Joe's league as a boxer. Billy was fast and confident. He reached his height that night. Joe Louis had passed his peak, which was probably reached the night he fought Max Schmeling.

Jersey Joe Walcott caught an aging, poorly conditioned Louis in their first fight and floored him twice before losing a long-disputed decision. But Joe proved he never makes the same mistakes when battling a foe the second time by knocking out Walcott the second time around.

America has been good to Joe, probably because unconsciously the vast majority of Americans recognize that Joe has been good for America. Joe's patriotism is as deep as his sense of fairness.

Everyone knows about Joe Louis' famous one-line speech at Madison Square Garden in which he told a country facing a long war, "We all gotta do our part and then we'll win, 'cause we're on God's side." Rowe, who saw him later that night, kidded him about the speech. "Joe," Billy said laughing, "you sure are dumb. You got it all mixed up. You should have said that God's on our side."

When Joe finally leaves the fight game for good, and goes to his place at Spring Hill, Michigan, he will live in a house with a history. In Civil

War days it was a station of the Underground Railway which sheltered Negroes as they traveled from the South to freedom.

Joe will sit on the porch with his memories. He will look out on 477 acres of rolling land, a softer, different land from the rocky soil on which he was born. The sounds of the ring will be far away and nostalgic.

But Joe Louis, one of sport's immortals, will not be forgotten. The man who wasn't born to be a fighter has built a memorial with his fists and his heart.

THE BABE RUTH

You Never Knew

By Jack Sher

TO those of us who came of age in that fabulous era of raccoon coats, the Charleston, Silent Calvin Coolidge, speakeasies, the gangsters, the talkies, it seems like a far-away time. But mention the name of one man and that era suddenly becomes only the day-before-yesterday. You can mention his name to a raggedy, dirty-faced, ten-year-old kid and his eyes will light up and he'll share that time with you. The name to say to the kid is Babe Ruth.

The kid probably won't know that the year was 1927 when George Herman Ruth hit sixty home runs. But he'll know the record is still unbroken. And he'll know about Babe Ruth, know that the Babe was the greatest. This is because the stories about Babe Ruth are timeless, have become legendary, belong to the kids of America, and will be kept alive as long as baseball is played in the streets of the cities, on sand lots, and in big-league parks.

It is sad, and sometimes a little unbelievable, to realize that the Babe has now become a sports figure of the past. While baseball is being played, you somehow think of Babe Ruth as still being up there at the plate, scowling at a pitcher, his big, heavy head cocked on one side, his toes turned in, his gargantuan bat waving nervously. The dusty figures in the record books can never tell anyone what it was like to see Babe Ruth hit a homer. They were the most complete and satisfying home runs ever hit. They were whacked so hard and they sailed so high and so far that nobody who ever saw Ruth belt one ever forgot it.

As a person, Babe Ruth lived his life in the same manner in which he hit home runs. He was a colorful, lusty, great-hearted, simple, intense man who was loved not only by the kids of his day, but by everyone, male and female, from poets to truck drivers. In tracking down the rich lore of Ruthiana, you also discover that the Babe was, perhaps, loved the most by those who knew him best—the cynical sportswriters, the managers who suffered to keep him in line, the men who played in the ball parks with him.

A Yankee pitcher who was a long-time teammate of Ruth's said, almost tearfully, "Why, that big, wild, rough old son of a gun was just about the greatest thing that ever came to baseball. I guess you could say that the Babe *was* baseball."

In putting down the legends about Ruth, in comparing the things that ballplayers, managers, sportswriters, and his friends will tell you, it is sometimes difficult to sift fact from fiction. But just remember that the important, sensational, tremendously colorful feats he performed are mostly true. The records are there to prove it. Sometimes the little, trivial incidents get mixed up and distorted in the retelling. It is not, for example, important to know whether Babe Ruth was born in the year 1894 or 1895, on the 6th of February, or the 7th.

The Babe was never one to bother with details. He always like to do things in high, wide and handsome style. He lived on a lavish, gigantic scale. He could get into more trouble, curse louder and more profanely, drink more, smoke and eat and enjoy himself more than any athlete of our time. But few ever resented what this large hulk of a man did, because the Babe, himself, never made any bones about the fact that he wanted to squeeze from life every ounce of delight known to a man's man.

A friend tells of seeing Ruth coming out of the Willard Hotel in Washington one fine Summer's day, splendid in his tan outfit, a fat cigar tilted jauntily at the sky. The Babe was occupying a suite in the hotel. The other ballplayers stayed in a less extravagant hostelry a few blocks away.

"Say, Babe," the friend asked, "what does that layout upstairs cost you?"

"One hundred bucks a day," Babe said expansively. Then seeing his friend's amazement, Ruth added, jovially, "Why, hell's fire, man, a guy's got to live, hasn't he?"

That was the Babe. He could do it. He could live right up to the hilt, knock around in a manner that would kill an ordinary man and go on day after day busting down the fences with those powerful drives.

He pleased the crowds, and the crowds loved him. After the 1919 scandal, when baseball hit its all-time low in public esteem, it was Babe Ruth more than any other player who won the fans back to the game.

The millions who loved Ruth, knew that he would never let them down. He was loyal to them, he loved baseball passionately, and for 22 years he gave the fans every nickel of their money's worth. Even when he struck out, the Sultan of Swat did it with such gigantic gusto and anger that it was a wonderful thing to watch. There was never anything half-way about the things Babe Ruth did. Every gesture or move he made on the diamond was for the big play. He put his heart and soul into each bit of action, shot the works whether it would make

him a magnificent bum or a sensational hero. Out of uniform, he never sneaked his fun; when he got into trouble it was always with an explosive bang and never with a whimper. You had to love the guy.

It may be pedestrian to put down some of Ruth's baseball records. Yet few people realize how many records he did set—marks that still stand unchallenged. The one most people know about is that all-time record of 60 circuit swats in one season. Ruth also holds the all-time home run record—730 four-bagger clouts in regular season play, the World Series, and an All-Star game. He also struck out more than any man in baseball—1,330 times. He was given the most bases-on-balls of any hitter, 2,056. He batted in more runs than any ballplayer ever has, 2,209. As a pitcher in World Series play, he holds the record for the most consecutive scoreless innings pitched, 29, against Brooklyn and the Cubs. It could go on and on. . . .

Ruth's all-time batting average is among the first 10 in baseball. The only retired men who have topped the Babe's .342 lifetime average are Wee Willie Keeler, Ty Cobb, Rogers Hornsby, Tris Speaker, Ed Delahanty, Dennis Brouthers, and Shoeless Joe Jackson. And only Ty Cobb crossed home plate more times in his baseball life than Babe Ruth.

"Shucks," Ruth once said, "I coulda hit a .600 lifetime average easy. But I woulda had to hit them singles. The people were payin' to see me hit them home runs."

But there was another reason Babe always aimed for the high wall. That was because nobody got a greater thrill out of seeing the apple sail out of the park than the Bambino himself. For sheer personal enjoyment, nothing was so delicious to watch as the top-heavy, dainty-ankled, beaming Babe jaunt around the bases with that peculiar, mincing step.

There can't be a story written about the Babe without including the greatest, most colorful home run he ever hit. It was the one against the Cubs on October 1st in the third game of the 1932 World Series. The score was tied at 4-4 in the fifth inning and Ruth had hit a homer in the first. As he came to the plate, one of the Cub players rolled a lemon out of the dugout toward him and Grimes and Malone wiggled their fingers at him and called him names.

All of this was the climax to a feud that had been going on since the Series had begun. It was started by Ruth because of a pal of his, a former Yankee shortstop, Mark Koenig. The Cubs had bought Koenig from the San Francisco Missions in mid-season and Mark, hitting .353 in 33 games, had been the spark plug that helped them win the National League pennant. When Ruth heard that the Cub players had voted Koenig only a half share in the Series jackpot, his disgust and wrath were colossal.

"Hey, Mark," Ruth bellowed at Koenig when he came out on the

field for the first game, "how are you? Who are those cheapskates with you?"

The Cubs burned. They hurled epithets back at Ruth, calling him a pot-belly, a balloon-head, a bum. As each game progressed, the epithets became more bitter and personal and salty. Ruth's dislike for the Cubs and their anger at him reached a height on that crucial moment when he stepped to the plate. The din of abuse was deafening.

Ruth glowered, stepped into the box, said to catcher Gabby Hartnett, "If that bum Root throws it in there, I'll knock it over the fence again." The Cubs yelled derisively. Root grooved one for a strike. The Babe held up one finger. Root sent another down the middle. Babe held up two fingers. Then came that wonderful gesture, the most talked-about one in baseball, when the Babe pointed at the fence, indicating where he was going to put the next one. Some say it was a point at the flag in center field. Some say that Babe just waved at the fence. Later, Babe said he just waved at the fence. But what an Olympian gesture!

The next pitch came down the line. Babe's bat came off the shoulder. There was a solid crack, and then, sailing through the air unbelievably straight, high, and beautiful was the home run Ruth had called. Traveling around the bases, Ruth was in the height of glee, slapping his knees, gesturing, hurling insults at the Cubs, waving his cap. He stopped on third, doubled over, straightened up and yelled "Squeeze the Eagle Club" at the Cub bench. Gehrig's homer, a few minutes later, broke the back of the Cubs, but it was anti-climactic.

The amazing angle on this feat occurred in a hotel lobby later that evening, when someone asked Ruth how he would have felt if he had missed that third one. Babe's little eyes opened wide, "Well, I'll be a blankety-blank," he said, "I never even thought of that!" That was Ruth. Play for the big one and never mind what might happen. And several seasons later, old Charlie Root, a great pitcher, admitted, "The one to Ruth that day was the best pitch I ever threw." And there isn't a Cub player on that '32 team that won't brag about being there the day Ruth let 'em have it.

It was Ruth's color that brought the fans through the turnstiles. They call Yankee Stadium "The House That Ruth Built" but Ruth was more to his team than just a glamorous attraction. Check through the Yankee records and you'll find that "as Babe Ruth went, so went the Yankees." When they won a pennant, it was usually because the Babe was teeing off day after day with those homers. And, as a defensive player, he was the equal of any of the great fielders.

Out there in right field, the Babe could really cover the ground. Once, in a Series game against the Cards, he leaned over the side of the right-field boxes and grabbed a ball inches above the spectators' heads. Then, in typical Ruthian fashion, he stepped back, bowed, doffed his cap, and

grinned. His throwing arm was remarkable, his tosses coming in low, bulletlike, and always true to the mark. This had nothing to do, as many believe, with the fact that he was once a great pitcher, for a fielder's throwing technique is totally different.

"I never saw the Babe make a mistake in a ball game," Ed Barrow, the long-time Yankee official, said. "Ruth always knew, instinctively, what to do on a ball field."

What made Ruth great was his ability to rise to any occasion, his sense of honest showmanship. Once, in a game against the White Sox in Chicago, the score was tied 1-1 in the fifteenth inning. As Ruth waited his turn to bat, he glanced over at Mark Roth, who was in charge of the Yankee transportation.

"What's the matter?" Ruth said. "Ya look sick."

Roth explained that he had a train waiting to take the Yankees home, but if the ball game didn't wind up soon they were going to miss it.

"Take it easy," Ruth grinned. "I'll fix that."

Ruth then walked out and took his familiar stance in the box, well back, feet close together. He faced the crafty curve-ball hurler, Mike Cvangros. The first ball Mike pitched Ruth smashed into the right-field stands. As they were climbing aboard the train, which they had to run to catch, the Babe, puffing and steaming, said to Roth, "Now, why didn't you tell me about that before?"

As a pitcher, Ruth, even as a youngster, had a godlike confidence in himself. During his years as hurler with the Red Sox, he beat the immortal Walter Johnson six times by a score of 1-0. In a crucial game with Detroit, with the Sox leading by one run in the seventh inning, Ruth faced the Murderers Row of that time—Bob Veach, Sam Crawford, and Ty Cobb. He struck them out, with the bases loaded, fanned 'em one-two-three.

Old Herb Pennock, the Yankee pitcher, used to tell Ruth, "I always feel just like a kid at a circus whenever I see you hit a home run, Babe."

The circus atmosphere carried over into his personal life. When Ruth and his family lived in a New York apartment, he used to throw an annual blowout for newsmen and photographers. When it was over, the penthouse always looked as though it had been swept by a Florida hurricane, paper and flashbulbs all over the floor. The Babe loved the flashbulbs. He would gather them up, walk over to the window, and drop them into the street far below. They fell like raindrops and when they hit it was like the Fourth of July. To the Babe the explosion was like the roar of the countless thousands who had just watched him crack another homer.

Everyone knew the Babe, and he could get away with anything. Grantland Rice, a long-time golf-playing partner of the Babe, likes to tell about the time he and Ruth went roaring up a one-way street in New

York, traveling the wrong way in one of Ruth's shiny cars. A cop chased them in a motorcycle and, as Ruth pulled up to the curb, the cop began roaring, "Can't you see this is a one-way street?"

"Why, you blankety-blank so-and-so!" the Babe roared back. "I'm *driving* one way!"

The cop jumped on the running board, fighting mad. Then his face broke into a grin. "Well, I'll be—it's Babe Ruth!"

"How are you, kid?" Babe beamed. And that's all there was to that.

Those were the golden, glorious years when life was wonderful for the Babe and he was riding high. Money was rolling in. A candy bar was named after him. He endorsed endless products. One year he carried around a check for \$15,000, a gift from a company that made breakfast cereals. Ruth always had the check in his pocket wherever he went, into a bar, a restaurant, everywhere. When the time came to pay the bill, the Babe would pull out his 15 G check and tell them to cash it. This, of course, could never be done, and whoever was with Ruth had to pay the bill, while the Bambino roared.

Ruth played this little trick so many times that the check became battered and torn, and it was almost impossible to read the figures. And, as the story goes, both the bank and the breakfast food company went broke in the depression, so Babe couldn't cash the check when he finally tried. But he took it with a grin and a shrug. He had had his fun, more than \$15,000 worth.

Few men knew George Herman Ruth as well as Ford Frick, now president of the National League. Frick, for many years, ghosted many of the articles which appeared under Ruth's byline. Sitting in his office in New York's RCA building, Frick likes to talk about Ruth.

"The Babe was a perennial Peter Pan," Frick said, "but he was not the big, dumb guy that some people would have you believe. Ruth's IQ was far above average. He had a native intelligence and that remarkable ability to adjust to any situation. He was just a happy-go-lucky, friendly, big-hearted guy. Everyone liked him. I don't know of a single enemy he ever had, or a grudge he carried that lasted more than a few days."

It is well known that Ruth generally traveled alone. He was seen with different friends every night. No man on the Yankee ball club was singled out by Ruth as a special friend, although Herb Pennock and Bob Meusel were probably with him most often outside the ball park.

There was a reason for this, as Frick explained it. The Yankee managers, particularly little Miller Huggins, discouraged the other ball-players from becoming too attached to the Babe. He was a hero to most of them, particularly the younger players on the club, and if he took them along on his great, brawling, wonderful sprees, they would not have been able to absorb it the way the Babe could.

In later years, when the King of Clout slowed down a little, he devel-

oped an almost maternal instinct toward some of the Yankee players. It is not true, as has been written, that Lou Gehrig and Ruth did not get along together. Gehrig, shortly before his tragic death, told this writer that Ruth was one of the best friends he had on the Yankee squad. He credited the Babe with helping him gain confidence when he first came to the Yanks and frankly admitted his awe and wonder at Ruth's greatness.

There wasn't an ounce of envy or jealousy in the Babe's character. There didn't have to be. He thought he was the best home-run hitter in the world—and he was. What sometimes irked the quiet, shy Gehrig was Ruth's open and bombastic praise of the young Yankee in public. Ruth, Frick will tell you, worried about Gehrig much more than he ever did about himself. "Lou was sometimes embarrassed by the fatherly advice Ruth would often shower upon him publicly and privately," said the National League boss.

One of the most amusing lectures Ruth ever gave Gehrig started in the form of a philosophical discussion in a Chicago hotel lobby.

"If a guy flops," the Babe began grandly, "if the managers turn against him, if everybody and everything goes back on a fellow, he can always be sure of his eats as a waiter. But, Lou," Ruth went on seriously, "a young fellow like you ought to save your money. Now, a bird has got to think of the time when he can't play ball no longer."

This was enormously hilarious to the ballplayers who heard it and who had, for years, watched the Babe throw his money away with the carefree air of a kid discarding used peanut shells. But when Ruth gave Gehrig that earnest spiel, he meant it with all of his great and good heart.

Ruth taught Gehrig how to get more power into his drives, how to hook a ball at the end of a swing. These were things the sports recorders of the day passed over, not because they didn't want to credit the Babe, but there was always something more colorful to write about him.

There was one incident that tells more clearly than anything else why ballplayers loved Ruth. It was mid-season and Ruth and Gehrig were very close in the matter of home runs hit. Then, on a Western swing of the Yankees, Gehrig pulled the impossible. One day, with a mighty clout, he caught up with the Babe in homers hit.

That night, on the train, Ruth suddenly burst into the Pullman, his arms loaded with jars of pickled eels. This, as everyone knew, was Gehrig's favorite dish. Ruth, after Gehrig had tied him in homers, had toured the town buying all the jars of pickled eels he could find. This was the Babe's surprise party for Lou. The whole train was invited to attend Babe's party for Gehrig, which lasted most of the night.

Ruth loved a celebration, a big time. He loved noise and laughter with music, all the things he had never had as a kid. When there wasn't a reason for a blowout, the Babe invented one. Even on road trips there

was a party air in any surroundings where the King was. His portable phonograph was always with him, grinding out loud, sentimental tunes, which the Babe accompanied in his foghorn voice.

The Babe drove his flashy, shiny automobiles at breakneck speed. One night, after a game in Washington, with his wife and several ballplayers in the car, Ruth sped through the night, bellowing songs at the top of his voice. He had cracked two homers that day and it was difficult to stay on anything as low as a road. He didn't. The car swerved, left the highway, and rolled over several times. By some miracle, nobody was seriously injured. The headlines that next morning screamed that Babe Ruth had been killed in an auto accident, but the Babe disproved it by hitting a circuit clout off the Athletics that afternoon in Philadelphia and tossing another party that night.

It is fantastic that a man who indulged in such outlandish abuse of himself physically could go on year after year, the way the Babe did. It actually caught up with him only once. That was in 1925, when Ruth, on a Yankee-Dodger exhibition tour, swung off the train in a tiny Southern town and, hugely happy and hungry, gorged himself to the score of 12 hot dogs and eight bottles of soda pop.

"Saw Ruth in half," somebody once cracked at Yankee Stadium, "and you'll find half of Stevens' concession in him."

But that day, it did not turn out funny. The Babe, green of face and filled with pain, was stricken with acute indigestion by the time the train reached Asheville, North Carolina. He was rushed to New York, to St. Vincent's Hospital, where for a week the condition of Babe Ruth's stomach was discussed all around the world. He very nearly died. Just as they were to do in his final illness 23 years later, little kids sat out in the streets under his window with flowers, sport fans across the country, housewives and school girls, read the daily bulletins about his health and fretted and prayed for him.

And then, all of a sudden, there he was again, out in Yankee Stadium, looking a little pale and weak, but ready to swing the big bat. Even when he got sick, Babe had to do it in a large and lavish fashion.

No photograph of Ruth, whether in baseball uniform or civilian clothes, can give a true image of the man. You had to see him in person. Picture a huge, unshapely man, six feet tall, most of his 220 pounds seemingly beginning at his waist and traveling upward to round, broad, massive shoulders. Picture too a bearlike quality about the upper half of his body, supported by small, frail-looking legs and delicate ankles.

Think of the Babe's head: overly large, heavy, like a big, round ball on his shoulders. A face both comic and ugly, kindly and fierce, the face of toughness and poverty and honesty. A strong, earthy face, with a large, pushed-in nose, a squat-featured face, with small, deep-sunk, bright brown eyes under a low forehead. His teeth tiny and even, his

hair dark brown. A common, everyday, kicked-around, wonderfully human face. A round face ugly the way Abe Lincoln's long face was ugly, a face you would, upon seeing it, never forget. In any kind of a crowd, instantly recognizable—unmistakable—always the Babe.

Ruth's civilian clothes fitted his personality. He liked them rich and colorful, tending mostly to brilliant browns and tans. In his heyday, his favorite costume was a huge tan-colored polo coat, which made him seem even more massive and he generally wore a cap. "Don't picture Ruth in an ordinary hat," the ace sportswriter, Frank Graham, said. "It just wouldn't look right."

It wouldn't. Nothing ordinary looked good on the "Jedge," as his Yankee teammates called him.

It was always a source of constant amazement and good-natured envy to other ballplayers when they saw the reaction most women had on meeting Ruth. They loved him. They passed by the more slim-figured, handsome-faced men to trot around on the arm of the Babe. "It ain't his looks. It ain't the way he talks," a big league shortstop once said, seeing Ruth surrounded by women. "It's a kind of a magic that gets 'em."

The magic is explainable. It has always worked not only on women but on everyone. Ruth's attraction always was his down-to-earth, warm, natural approach. Ruth was a hero not only because he could hit home runs, but as the guy-who-would-show-you-the-best-time-in-the-world, a man with tremendous personal magnetism, coarse and rough, but all man, and oozing warmth and confidence. The small, warm eyes held the glitter of good times.

To the Babe, anything feminine under 35 years of age was called "Sister." Older than that it was "Mom," but when the name rumbled out of his massive chest it was loving and intimate. He called old friends "Kid," because he never remembered names, but that "kid" meant just as much as if he had remembered the person's first name.

"I guess Babe knew my name well enough," Ed Barrow said, "but he would often call me Uncle or Pop. That was the way the Babe was. Plenty of names he didn't know. Bill Dickey stayed with the Babe for eight years and Babe never could remember his name."

Probably no man in baseball had as great an influence on Babe Ruth as Edward Grant Barrow. No man crossed Barrow more than once. He was the greatest rough-and-tumble fighter of his time, one of the guiding spirits behind the Yankees.

For 22 years, Ed Barrow knew Babe Ruth as well as one man can know another. He coached him, befriended him, punished him, forgave him, advised him, once almost beat the hell out of him. "But," the good old man said, sitting in the deep chair, thinking back, "there is just one real feeling I have left about the Babe—I miss him." The old man paused. "I miss him because he was more trouble than any ballplayer

who ever lived and maybe," a small smile came across his face, "that's why I miss him the most."

It was, as many people know, Ed Barrow who made Ruth from a pitcher into an outfielder. Everyone gives Barrow credit for that, except Barrow himself. It was Barrow who, watching Ruth take his cuts at the plate, first put him in as pinch hitter. And then Barrow chased him into the outfield and encouraged the Babe to learn all he could about that right-field position.

"But nobody really made Ruth into an outfielder," Barrow said. "He made himself. You didn't have to teach him anything."

It was big Ed Barrow, however, who was the first to see that Ruth would be more valuable as a hitter than a pitcher, more of an asset playing every day than in one or two games a week. The real story of how the Babe changed over is one for Barrow to tell, because he is the only one who really knows it.

"In 1918," Barrow related, "the Babe had been doubling between pitching and the outfield, playing 95 games for me in right field. In 1919, early in the season, I called him in one day before a game and asked him what he would rather do—be a pitcher or stay in the outfield."

That warm, early Summer afternoon when the tall, not fully grown kid stood in front of Manager Barrow, baseball history was being made. The Babe wrinkled his forehead, brushed a meaty finger over his large nose, and thought about it, Barrow said, for a full moment.

"Don't suppose I could go on playing both, Ed?" he said.

Barrow smiled.

"Nope, guess not," Babe said hesitantly. "Well, then, I'll play the outfield."

That was it. If he had said he wanted to remain a pitcher, Barrow would probably not have forced the issue. Ruth was already established as one of the best hurlers of the day. Perhaps he would have switched eventually to the outfield, but Barrow won't take the credit for sending him there. In Ed's book, Ruth made the decision himself.

Talking about Ruth, Barrow's slow, heavy voice made the past come to life again. Barrow remembered, chuckling quietly, about Ruth's terrible memory for names and faces and what happened in a World Series game in 1918 against the Cubs.

"Ruth was pitching that day," Barrow said, "and Coach Bill Carrigan told him to be careful of a hitter named Leslie Mann. He advised the Babe to dust Mann off, scare him away from hitting."

The Babe said he sure would, as Barrow told about it, still smiling. In the second inning, facing a big Cub batter, Ruth let one fly at the batter's head. The man couldn't get out of the way fast enough and the pitch flattened him. Ruth came into the bench after the inning, all smiles.

"Say," he grinned at Carrigan, "I guess I gave that fellow Mann a dusting he won't forget."

"Why, you silly so-and-so," Carrigan hollered, "that wasn't Mann, that was Max Flack."

The Babe just stood there and took Carrigan's tongue lashing and Barrow and his ballplayers turned away to hide their laughing faces. Barrow knows most of the best stories about the Babe's bad memory for faces. A second baseman for the Browns, who had played against Babe all season, stopped him one afternoon after a close Yankee-Brown game in St. Louis and remarked about what a tough game it had been. "It sure was," Ruth said, shaking his head. "Did you get out to see it?"

Once, Herb Pennock asked Ruth to go out with him for an evening and Ruth said he couldn't because he had a date with a couple of people. Herb asked who it was. Babe scratched his head and said, "I dunno, that man and woman in the movies." That man and woman were Doug Fairbanks and Mary Pickford.

"St. Louis and Washington were always towns in which the Babe got into the most mischief," Barrow laughed. "I guess he had more good-time-Charlie friends there. One night in Washington, I stayed up all night waiting for him to get in."

Barrow was the Red Sox pilot then, with a reputation for being strict with his players. He had hired a coach named Dan Howley who told Barrow, "You let me room with that big fellow and I'll have a ring in his nose in no time." The ring lasted until that night in Washington.

At six A.M. Barrow stormed into the room to find Ruth in bed, the covers up to his neck, peacefully smoking a pipe.

"Where have you been?" Barrow raged. "What are you doing smoking that pipe?"

"Well, now, Ed," the Babe said, "I always like to smoke a pipe this time of morning."

Barrow pulled back the covers. Ruth was fully dressed, shoes and all. That afternoon, in the dressing room, his stomach slightly upset, the Babe growled out loud about what he was going to do to certain people. "If they don't quit snoopin' around in my private affairs," the Babe said, looking at Barrow, "they are gonna get a punch in the nose."

Barrow was not a man who frightened easily. He walked over to where Babe was standing, thrust out his jaw and said, "Nobody is going to talk to me like that. I want everybody out of this dressing room but Ruth."

Then Barrow walked across the room and began to take off his coat. When he turned around, everybody was out of the room, including Ruth. In fact, by the time Ed Barrow got his coat off, the Babe was in deep right field chasing flies.

Ed went out, called Ruth in from the field, and told him he was sus-

pended. That night, on the train, there was a knock on Barrow's compartment door. It was, as Ed suspected, the Babe. He wanted to talk things over. He'd just been upset, he said, and he hoped that everything was okay now.

"You're still suspended," Barrow said curtly.

"Couldn't you just wire the Judge and have it lifted?" Babe pleaded.

Barrow said he would let Ruth know in the morning. The Babe went away, but he was back again in a half hour, saying, "Listen, Ed, can't you please let me know tonight? I can't sleep."

Barrow lifted the suspension then and there and Ruth went down the car whooping and hollering joyously. Barrow told the story not to show what a Peck's bad boy Ruth was, but to indicate how deeply he loved baseball. Nothing was a more cruel punishment than depriving him of the right to play.

Nobody had more migraine from the big swat king's tempestuous behavior than little Miller Huggins, the great Yankee manager. The \$5,000 fine and indefinite suspension that he slapped on the Babe in 1925 crashed into every newspaper in the country. It was, because it was Ruth, the largest fine ever dealt a ballplayer. It was the result of many things: Ruth's bad behavior in the clubhouse, his heckling of Hug, his escapades by candlelight, and his refusal to accept discipline and stay in shape.

The scenes between Huggins and Ruth in the Yankee clubhouse were often a bad example to younger players, but they afforded some of the most picturesque and explosive dialogue ever heard in baseball.

"Why, you little runt," Ruth would explode. "Where do you get off, callin' me a big mug?"

"You're a big, no-good mug," Hug would rant. "God made you that way and you'll always be that way!"

"If you wasn't such a little runt!" Ruth would storm, "I'd smack you down."

"Why, you lousy, stinkin' stiff," Hug would come back. "Get outa here!"

"Why don't you send me out?" Ruth would yell. "G'wan, you haven't got enough guts!"

So it would go. It reached a climax in St. Louis in 1925 when Hug did put the skids under Ruth. The Babe climbed on a train and told reporters at all the stops all the way to New York just what was going to happen to Miller Huggins after Babe Ruth talked it over with Jake Ruppert.

The first person Hug called after he had fined and suspended Ruth was Ed Barrow. Ruth's ex-manager told Huggins that the Babe had it coming. He said that he would back him up all the way, if Huggins would stick to his guns. Barrow knew his Babe Ruth and knew that the best thing that could happen to the man was a sound chastising.

"Ruth was yelling pretty loud when he left St. Louis that day," Barrow smiled. "But the closer he got to New York, the more he began thinking how terrible it was to be out of a Yankee uniform. By the time he got to Grand Central, the Babe wasn't quite sure he was entirely right. But the newspapers were rolling out stories of his threats and so he had to follow it through and see Ruppert."

It was a sadder and wiser man who walked out of Colonel Ruppert's office that day in New York. Barrow and the owner of the Yankees talked turkey and Ruth was forced to tell the world that he had "done wrong." He'd play ball for Huggins, he said. He was sorry about everything.

Nobody could accept defeat more gracefully than Ruth. He never held a grudge. In spite of the years of quarreling with Huggins, once the Babe got on the right track again, he forgave his little manager everything. As the years rolled along, Ruth's affection for Huggins grew and those who knew Huggins well said that he had more genuine love for Babe Ruth than for any of his Yankees, with the possible exception of Gehrig. When Hug died, managing the Yanks right up to almost the last moment, Ruth was the saddest man on the squad.

One angle about the fine that Barrow revealed was that although Ruth paid it, Colonel Ruppert, many years later, returned the money. It was not returned, however, until after the death of Miller Huggins, as Ruppert had made Hug a promise that the fine would stick. The \$5,000 was handed back to Ruth because he had kept good his promise to toe-the-line for Hug.

Money was always a problem to Ruth in his early days in baseball; he couldn't seem to throw it away fast enough. It was Ed Barrow and Christy Walsh, the manager of Babe's syndicate and endorsement deals, who finally got Ruth to take out the insurance and annuity policies that he lived on after his retirement from baseball.

The Bambino's seasonal holdouts for more money were always a splendid source of newspaper copy back in the days when the Babe was being paid \$40,000, then \$52,000, then the unbelievable sum of \$80,000 for a season of ball playing. None of the holdouts were phony. The Babe believed he was worth a million dollars a year, the way he hit those homers. Once, in St. Petersburg, Florida, after a long siege of refusing to come to terms, he signed a \$50,000 contract under the bleachers during a practice session. He signed it without even reading the terms.

Ballplayers owe an eternal debt of gratitude to Babe Ruth for inadvertently upping the salaries of all big-league players. Ruth's yearly clamor for more money, the stubborn victories he won in getting paid what he was worth, benefited other players. A popular chant at the time, among less spectacular performers, was, "If that guy Ruth is worth \$80,000, I must be worth at least a third of that!" Some owners of ball

clubs have never quite forgiven the Babe for starting the trend that has enabled players to share a rightful amount of the profits.

There was a great deal of bluff in Ruth, but it was always backed by courage. One of the things that tickled his teammates most was the Babe's opinion that he was as great a man with his fists as he was with a bat in his hand. Once, with Bob Meusel in tow, he stormed into the Giant dressing room after a hectic game and might have wound up taking on the whole club. The presence of newspapermen averted the fight. A Giant player suggested that Ruth was putting on the show for the benefit of the press, which so embarrassed the big fellow that he made all of them promise it would never be mentioned in the newspapers. It wasn't, until years later.

The Babe was actually not very handy when it did come to a show-down fight. Nobody remembers a fight that he ever won. The same Bob Meusel who was backing Babe up that day in the Giant dressing room, has, so the stories go, batted the Babe on the beeper plenty of times.

Babe loved to ride anyone whom he could really upset. One of his favorite targets was the Yankees' great first-sacker, Wally Pipp. In St. Louis one day, Pipp was having a bad time of it, muffing every ball that came his way. The Babe was riding him incessantly, having the time of his life. In the seventh inning, Pipp bungled an easy grounder. Ruth trotted in from the field and gave him some lip.

"Say another word," Pipp growled, "and I'll punch you in the nose."

Ruth was instantly the warrior. "Why, you big baboon," the Babe threatened, "you wouldn't dare to—"

Ruth never finished the sentence. Pipp let one go and it caught the Babe right on the snout. Down he went. He got up and began swinging again, but those who saw the fight say that Pipp had all the best of it. The players separated the two contestants. Pipp strode to the plate, hopping mad, and smacked a home run into the right-field bleachers. Ruth, following him, dropped another homer in the same spot.

That night Pipp and Ruth shook hands and were off on a good time together. But, a few days later, it was Ruth and Waite Hoyt in a tangle, with Hoyt getting all the best of it.

None of Ruth's brawling exhibitions, on or off the field, ever lowered him in the eyes of his fans. The wonderful and fascinating thing about the man was that everything he did seemed so essentially human. He was the most accessible of all ballplayers. Anyone could approach him. He had a ready handshake for everybody, a big grin, a friendly gesture or a large "Hullo, there, how are you?" for a working stiff, or a man in a \$200 suit. But most of all, he belonged to the kids.

Every year, thousands of grimy little hands thrust out baseballs for the autograph that sent them away with eyes shining. The Babe always complied. On slow days in right field, he would lean against the bleacher

screen and chat with the kids. He would pose for pictures, pat them on the head, ask them questions, talk man-to-man with them about baseball.

Of all the stories about the things he did for kids, perhaps the most wonderful one concerns the trip he made to New Jersey one day to see a 13-year-old boy named Johnny Sylvester. The boy had undergone a serious operation and had failed to improve. He needed something to hold him together, to make him want to fight for life.

The boy's hero was Babe Ruth. Some say it was a doctor, others a newspaperman, still others the boy's father who called Ruth at Yankee Stadium and told him the story. It doesn't matter who called. The next morning the door of the hospital ward opened and in walked Babe Ruth.

Paul Gallico, describing the scene, wrote, ". . . it was God himself who walked into the room, straight from His glittering throne, God dressed in a camel's-hair polo coat and flat camel's-hair cap, God with a flat nose and little piggy eyes and a big grin, and a fat, black cigar sticking out of the side of it."

Ruth sat on the edge of the bed and talked to the boy as long as the doctors would allow him to stay. He talked about baseball, scrawled his name on a ball, and handed it to the boy. Then he leaned down and told Johnny that he was going to hit a home run that afternoon, especially for him.

Ruth could always call his shots when they were great enough. He did hit that homer for Johnny. And the boy lived. It really doesn't matter that, a few weeks later, when the boy's father approached the Babe in a hotel lobby and thanked him for saving the life of his son, the Babe couldn't remember the boy's name. He didn't have to remember it. The name wasn't important, the life was.

The stories about Ruth and kids are endless. His sincere love of them was never doubted. Even the endlessly rolling presses grinding out maudlin and often phony and concocted stories about his feeling for them, could not destroy or lessen the true fact that the Babe's affection for kids was wholly honest, wonderful, and generous.

It seems strange and incredible that the man who has always loved kids so much got little of that close, personal, warm love when he, himself, was a kid. But that probably explains why Ruth thought so much of children, and wanted them to have so much of everything. For the small boy, who was to become the hero of the kids of the nation, was a cast-off, discarded, ill-fed, ill-treated youngster, one whose earliest days were spent amid the stink and viciousness of abject poverty.

Not much has been told about Ruth's early life. The Babe never liked to dwell upon those days. The facts are vague and misty, but piecing them together you get enough to know that he began life as a battered, pushed-around little nobody, scratching for food, struggling to stay alive, unwanted by anyone.

The Babe's earliest recollections, he once wrote, were of the violent, traffic-congested streets along the Baltimore waterfront. He recalled the curses of the truck drivers, the way they would slash at kids' legs with their whips. He remembered the hatred for "coppers," as he called them, and fist fights, and being shagged, and living on the crummy borderline of crime.

He was not born with the last name of Ruth. There has always been a doubt as to who his parents were and what his last name really was. It was either Gearhardt or Erhardt and he was born, if the records are correct, on February 7, 1895, in a house in Baltimore, Maryland. Ruth's mother died when he was very young. Some say her first name was Ruth, but that has never been verified. His father was a rough, brawling man, who occasionally made his living as a butcher and was killed, if the oft-repeated story is true, in a street fight.

Barrow seems to think the Babe had a brother named Benjamin, but he isn't sure. One story has it that Ruth, while playing with the Red Sox, gave money to his father to set him up in business. But others maintain that Ruth's father was killed when he was five or six years old. But he was not, as most people believe, an orphan.

Shortly before he became seven years old, the youngster was picked up on the streets of Baltimore and sent to the St. Mary's Industrial Home, a Catholic institution which was dedicated to reforming and guiding the discarded and unmanageable kids who roamed in wild bands in Ruth's neighborhood.

A kindly man named Brother Gilbert took personal charge of the youngster and was to help him all the rest of his life. In later years, when Ruth slipped into wild habits, Miller Huggins sometimes sent for Brother Gilbert to talk to Ruth and it was the one influence that always steadied him.

At St. Mary's, Ruth was truculent and hard to manage. At first, he missed the roving toughs of the street gangs. But Brother Gilbert steadfastly stood by the boy, got him interested in athletics, and told the other brothers that great things were in store for George, as he always called him. There were 43 different ball teams at St. Mary's and young Ruth soon got into the swing of things.

The good brothers of St. Mary's often worried about young Ruth. Even then, he never seemed to take very good care of himself. In the Winter he would stroll about in an open shirt, and he always disdained underwear. One time, on a very cold day, Brother Paul found Ruth sitting in the open yard, wearing only a pair of torn trousers and a thin, cotton shirt. Brother Paul told him to go inside and put on warm clothes.

"Aw naw, Brother Paul," the kid grinned. "I'm too tough to catch cold." And he was.

The brothers taught Ruth a trade. As a child, he was a shirtmaker. But it was baseball that really fascinated Ruth.

Big George, as the kids called him (he was always large for his age) played every position on the various ball teams. On the school's first team, he finally settled down as a catcher. He caught left-handed. Although Ruth always threw and batted left-handed, he wrote with his right hand, something sportswriters of the day never noticed until Ruth pointed it out to them.

During his last year in St. Mary's, Ruth switched to pitching. Whenever he was hurling, the whole school turned out to watch him mow the batters down. Many of the other brothers at St. Mary's tried to get him interested in some trade, but it was Brother Gilbert who understood that the boy was destined to become a ballplayer. It was Brother Gilbert who wrote a letter to Jack Dunn, then manager of the Baltimore Orioles, and begged him to come and have a look at the Babe.

Ruth was just 18 when Dunn came to see him play. He was wearing a pair of faded, blue overalls, too small to contain his then long, thin, out-of-joint-looking body. But Dunn was impressed enough to want Ruth and, a few days later, Brother Gilbert called the kid and told him about Dunn's offer.

Ruth was bewildered and delirious with excitement. He could scarcely believe that anybody would pay him to play baseball. It was arranged that Jack Dunn would become his guardian and that his salary for the year would be \$600. In the Spring of 1914, the 19-year-old George Herman Ruth reported to the Oriole training camp. On that day, the name "Babe" was created.

Ruth, tagging at Dunn's heels, walked out on the ball field. A man named Stienman, a coach for the Baltimore club, grinned, and said, "Well, here comes Jack with his newest babe." The nickname stuck.

Before the season was well under way, Dunn had doubled his salary. Then he sold him to Joe Lannin, owner of the Boston Red Sox. Ruth was sold with a pitcher named Shore and an infielder named Egan and the total price for all three was \$22,000. Ruth was not quite ready for the big leagues, manager Red Carrigan and boss Ed Barrow thought, so they farmed him out to Providence in the International League.

Ruth went so well in Providence that he was recalled to Boston before the season was out. That was the last and only time that the Babe was ever sent to the minors. Ruth pitched four games for the Red Sox that year. He was credited with winning two and losing one. In 1915 he won 18 games and lost only six. Ruth was beginning to fill out now. Few of the players on the Oriole team would have recognized the kid who bought a bicycle when he came to Baltimore and rode it at break-neck speed around the town.

At 19, the Babe began to look around and enjoy life. He bought a car

that Summer and married a 16-year-old waitress, a Texas girl named Helen Woodford, later burned to death in a tragic hotel fire. They had two children, who died in infancy. In that same year, Ruth struck out Home Run Baker and hit the first home run of his big-league career.

That homer was hit against a young club in the American League called the New York Yankees. Ruth was pitching that day against Jack Warhop. The day was May 16, 1915. When Ruth came to the plate and took his peculiar stance, the fans broke into laughter. When he smacked Warhop's pitch over the right-field fence, the customers howled with glee. But they told each other it was a freak, a lucky thing. Only the Babe, and possibly Ed Barrow and Carrigan, knew it wasn't. Ruth was broken-hearted that day, for he lost the ball game to Warhop in the last of the ninth.

In the years that followed, '15 to '18, rival pitchers learned to fear the big man with the peculiar stance. His fame as a home-run hitter began to grow. But he was still known best as the top pitcher in the American League. Ty Cobb had more trouble hitting Ruth than any pitcher in baseball. In a game against Detroit one day, Cobb got so mad at Ruth they almost came to blows.

Cobb claimed that day that Ruth was doctoring the ball. He was tossing a strange throw that he called a "sailer," a ball which, when it broke, actually seemed to "sail" away from the bat. Ty took a cut at it, missed, and demanded to see the ball. Umpire Billy Evans handed it to him, then tossed it out of the game. Cobb took a swing at another one, missed again. In all, Cobb made umpire Evans throw away six balls. He finally struck out.

"You're cheating!" the great Tyrus raged at Ruth. "I'll find out how you do it and run you right outa the league!"

Ruth doubled over with laughter. Cobb never did find out.

Cobb, whom Ruth could always rile, was a great ballplayer in Ruth's estimation. In later years, he credited Cobb with being the greatest hitter in baseball. But Ruth's paramount idols were Harry Hooper and Tris Speaker, who did a great deal to give him the polish that was later to make him such a great man in the outfield. In Ruth's book, there has never been an outfielder who could approach the fielding skill and all-around playing of the old Red Soxer, Harry Hooper.

Although it wasn't until 1919 that Ruth's fame became nationwide, the legend of Ruth began, for ballplayers, the first day he put on a Red Sox uniform. The Babe pitched his first big-league game on July 11, 1914, against Cleveland, whipping them, 4-3. He went into the game with no sleep, having stayed up all night on the train from Baltimore to Boston.

He pitched the longest game in World Series play, 14 innings, in 1916, and won it from the Brooklyn Dodgers. It was Ruth's hurling in

1915 that helped bring the Red Sox their fourth pennant. He led them to another in 1918, when he set his record for the most scoreless innings pitched in World Series play. That year Ruth played 95 games in the outfield, hit 11 homers.

It was the Babe, switching to a permanent position in the outfield, who turned the spotlight from pitchers to hitters. Until Ruth, the great baseball heroes were the moundsmen, Christy Mathewson, Grover Alexander, Eddie Plank. But the Babe had broken Mathewson's pitching record. There were only a few more things he could have done as hurler. He was one of the great left-handers in the American League.

The 1919 home-run clouting of Babe Ruth was considered, at the time, a feat that would never again be equaled in baseball. That year, his last with the Red Sox, he hit 29 home runs, batted .322. Against the years when Ruth was later to hit 40 and 50 and 60 home runs in a season, it does not seem like much. But at that time, no major-leaguer had ever hit that many. Cliff Cravath of the Phillies, in 1915, had hit 24 homers. In 1902 Socks Seybold of the Athletics had hit 16. But 29! To the fans it was unbelievable.

Babe Ruth's name echoed across the country. Everywhere the Red Sox performed, the fans turned out in droves to watch Ruth wave that big, 54-ounce stick, the largest one in baseball. The Babe took his success in his stride. He put on great shows. He challenged pitchers up and down the land to stop him. The kid who four years ago had been riding around on his first bike, bought with baseball money, now opened a cigar factory in Boston, with a picture of the Babe on every wrapper. In Tampa, Florida, in an exhibition game, he hit what has been recorded as the longest home run in history. The ball traveled 587 feet from Ruth's bat, landing in a racetrack across the street from the ball park.

On July 18, 1919, Lee Fohl, manager of the Cleveland Indians, sent in his best pitcher, Coumbe, to stop the rising young star. Ruth answered by cracking a home run off Coumbe with the bases loaded. And, as the story goes, after the game Fohl, in disgust, resigned as manager.

Up in New York, a man named Ruppert sat in his brewery office and read about Ruth. He had a ball club named the New York Yankees. Ruppert had ambition, Ruth had that big club, and Harry Frazee, owner of the Red Sox, needed money. The Babe was sold for \$100,000, Ruppert lent Frazee \$350,000 more, and took a mortgage on Fenway Park.

Only a few have ever bothered to point out that the man who was to make the Yankees the greatest ball team in the world, was genuinely angry and unhappy about the deal that sent him to New York. The Babe said, "I like Boston. I got my start here and my heart is right here." But he went to New York and in 1920, his first year with the Yankees, he sent the sports world into verbal hysteria by rapping out 54 homers.

The era of the hitter was definitely in, and Babe Ruth was to lead them all for 14 more glorious years.

Even the old horsehide itself was changed to benefit the tremendous drawing power of the Babe. The "lively" ball was introduced to the American League, to be adopted a year later by the National League. Home-run hitters sprang up like mushrooms, but none could even come close to the records that Ruth was setting. Ball parks bulged whenever Ruth played in them. The King of Swat was introduced to the world. Twenty thousand fan letters a week poured in, burying the few letters Ruth still got from the good brothers at St. Mary's.

If Ruth had been unmanageable in Boston, he was 10 times more so with the Yankees. Life was one wonderful, glorious spree and nobody bothered, or dared, to bust it up. Ruppert and Barrow, who joined the club shortly after Ruth, let America's new idol swing along on his merry way. "That big mug has an iron constitution," they said. "He can take it." Or, "What's the difference what Ruth does, just as long as he keeps slamming them over the fence?"

In a sense, this was true. Nobody should have deprived the Babe of those glorious, good times. He had them coming to him. Those who are cheated of a decent early childhood have a right to stick their fists into life when the good days come, and grab all they can. The Babe grabbed. He ate 10 meals a day. He traveled and lived in style. He bought large and dazzling motor cars, smashed them up, and bought more.

Ping Bodie, who was listed on the roster of the Yankees as Babe Ruth's roommate, seldom saw him except in uniform. Once, when somebody asked Ping who he was rooming with, the ballplayer grinned and said, "With a suitcase." That crack tickled ballplayers all over the country. But in 1921, training on parties and late hours and liquids of a dubious nature, the 26-year-old rowdy whacked 59 balls clean out of the park for still another record.

It seems as though you could write forever and never record all there is to say about Ruth. One of the great things about the Babe was that he never lost his love of the game he played or his wonderful enthusiasm for living. He got in dutch by hopping into the stands one day and trying to beat the daylighters out of a fan who had been razzing him. A Ruth batting slump was the most colossal tragedy in the world. Once, after striking out five times in a row, he smashed his favorite bat to pieces. In 1921, he went on an unauthorized exhibition tour with Bob Meusel, and was suspended by Judge Landis. The suspension kept Ruth out of the first six weeks of the 1922 season, but, once back in the line-up, his big bat led the Yanks to another pennant.

The years rolled on. From 1919 to 1931, Ruth led the league in homers 11 times including a tie with Gehrig. Nobody could touch him. In 1929, it was still Ruth who kept the Yankees out in front. The coun-

try was rocking from the Wall Street crash, and the Great Depression was just around the corner, but the sportswriters found solace in the fact that nothing affected the Babe.

Every year there was one special, highlight story about the King of Swat. There was that sentimental and wonderful dinner that Babe gave for the sportswriters of the country, after having almost ruined himself by his wild dissipation in 1924 and 1925. James J. Walker, then a Senator, arose and made a speech begging Ruth to reform for the kids of the country. It might have been maudlin, but it wasn't because the Babe stood up and, with tears running down his big, ugly face promised to behave, to turn over a new leaf, and be an inspiration to those who worshipped him. Babe did. He didn't actually turn saint, but he kept his promise and was never again in serious trouble with umpires or managers.

A few years later, by 1929, the Babe had settled down quite a bit. He married for the second time, a Ziegfeld Follies girl named Claire Hodgson. He became a proud and careful parent to his two girls, Julia and Dorothy. He was learning moderation and restraint, everywhere except at the plate, where he whacked out 54 homers in '28 and 46 in '29.

The money kept on rolling in. Ruppert was giving him a bonus of \$100 for every circuit swat. His salary was climbing. As a ballplayer, Ruth was to go on to earn a total playing salary of \$872,000 and over a million dollars from his ghost-written stories and endorsements, barnstorming, and the movies. Twice he hit three home runs in one game. He had his picture taken with Marshal Foch. Kids in India, England, Japan and even Burma, knew about Babe Ruth. Somebody gave him an ornate crown to wear on his head, as befitting the King of Swat, but he wore it for one photo and then put it away.

In his spare time, when the party craze began to wear off, you could find Ruth on the days when baseball wasn't being played, out on the golf links or in a bowling alley. He shot in the low 70's, and bowled a fine game. He loved to hunt and once, when he should have been a co-star with Queen Marie of Roumania at a reception, he stayed out all afternoon with another ballplayer, potting at pheasant, saying, "Aw, heck, they won't miss me in all that crowd and that Queen will understand."

If there was ever a breaking point in the career of Babe Ruth, it was probably on the day that Miller Huggins died. The "great little guy" as the Babe called him, meant more to Ruth than most people realized. Or perhaps the climax of Ruth's career was that '32 series against the Cubs. He was never as good after that. He was 37 years old. The power was still there, the eyes were still small, sharp and good, but his legs were going back on him. The great Babe was slowing up.

More than anything else, the Babe wanted to manage the Yankees.

One of the reasons he never warmed up to manager Joe McCarthy was because Ruppert had given to McCarthy the job that Ruth had always dreamed about. In 1933, the Babe was down to 34 homers for the season. In '34 he was playing only occasionally. He hit 22 home runs that year. For the first time he had gone below the 29 home runs of 1919 when he began his league-leading career.

Perhaps the most tragic scene of his career took place in Jake Ruppert's office. It was late in the 1934 season. Ruth had hit only .288. The end was in sight now for the 39-year-old King. There was only one more goal, one more dream to be realized. With Christy Walsh, his hard-boiled little syndicate manager, beside him, the Babe put the issue squarely up to Ruppert.

"Let me manage the Yankees."

Ruppert was nettled by Ruth's abruptness. He was embarrassed and sorry and, for once, seemingly undecided about what he should do. The two men exchanged glances. The clashes of many years were in their eyes, and the friendship and the memories of the great years when the Yankees were the toughest and finest ball club in the country.

"Look, Ruth," the Colonel said slowly, "I know how much you want to manage this club. Believe me, I know what it means to you. I've thought about it many times. But this is a big job, Babe," Ruppert said softly. "You're untried as a manager. Would you go to Newark, Ruth—would you manage the ball club there—and then—"

"To Newark—" the Babe said. He was hurt. "I'm a big leaguer. I've always been a big leaguer."

Christy Walsh broke in, huffily. "No sir, Mr. Ruppert, it's the big job, or nothing."

Ruppert did not take his eyes off Ruth. The Babe met his gaze. Then his eyes turned away and he mumbled something from the deep caverns of his chest, turned, and walked slowly out of the room. That really was the end of the career of the greatest Yankee of them all.

After the '34 season, Ruth and Gehrig, with other Yankee players, toured Japan, swatting homers for the kids of that country who had taken to the great American game in a way that was close to fanatical. From there, the players completed a trip around the world. Throngs greeted them everywhere. The kids of all countries wanted to see the Babe in person. In February, Ruth came back to New York and asked Ruppert for his release. If he couldn't be the best Yankee on the field, or if he couldn't lead the Yankees from the dugout, he would never wear the New York uniform again.

He never did. Ruppert gave him an unconditional release from the Yankees. As a final gesture, the only decent one that could be made, he turned the Babe loose with no strings attached, refusing to make a profit on Ruth's new deal with Judge Fuchs, owner of the Boston Braves.

But the man whose very name was synonymous with baseball to so many fans and players, was now merely standing on the stage after the curtain had come down. He made one last, courageous, typical blustering and wonderfully Ruthian gesture to regain the strength and power that was irrevocably gone.

Starting in 1935 as an assistant manager and player for the Braves, Ruth hit six home runs. But, as the season got under way, as younger ballplayers raced past him, the Babe couldn't stay in there. He caught a cold. His legs began to buckle under him. He was very tired. In all, he stayed 97 days with the Braves, in the town of Boston where he had started.

On May 25th, at Pittsburgh, just before he turned in his spikes forever, Babe showed he still had the old Ruth touch. He hit three home runs in that one game. Shortly thereafter he quit.

The name of Babe Ruth dropped out of the sports pages. George Selkirk wore the big number 3 for the Yankees and was going good in the right-field garden in the Stadium.

Babe traveled around a bit, made an occasional statement for the press, appeared at a few benefits and dinners. Once, as he was packing to go to Honolulu, Frank J. Navin, owner of the Detroit Tigers, reached him by phone and offered him a job as pilot of that club. Nobody knows whether Ruth was embittered by the passing years, humble or confused, but, for once in his life, he could not quite make up his mind what he wanted. Navin asked him to stop through Detroit on his way West, but the Babe never did. When he got back from Honolulu, three months later, he had decided he wanted to get back in harness again. He called Navin.

"I'm ready to talk about that manager's job now, Frank," he said.

"Sorry, Babe," the voice came over the phone. "I've signed Mickey Cochrane."

It was quite a blow to the big fellow, but he covered it up and only a few knew how badly he felt. Nothing was breaking across the plate for the Babe now. "It's hell to be getting older," he said to a friend. Now and then an old time sportswriter, nostalgic for the past, would dig in the files of his memory and come up with a short tribute to the Babe and call him "the forgotten man of baseball."

You didn't hear of the Babe very much after that until 1938, when the love for the game got him again and, for a brief period, he put on a Dodger uniform and tried to make a go of it as a coach.

Ruth retired to his apartment on Riverside Drive. Now and again you would see him at the ball park, wrapped up in the familiar tan polo coat, chewing on one of the four cigars the doctor allowed him. Necks would crane, kids would gather, Babe would scrawl his name on baseballs. But it wasn't the same.

The Nazis moved across Europe, the Japs sneaked in on Pearl Harbor. We had a war on our hands. There were other things to think about besides baseball. Out in the tangled jungles of New Britain, a group of tired and battle-worn Marines lay in the sultry, late-morning heat, eyes searching for the enemy. Suddenly the Japs broke out into the clear, charging fanatically. To the ears of the Americans lying in wait came a chant both unbelievable and challenging. "To hell with Babe Ruth!" the Japs were shouting.

No, he was not quite forgotten. Not to the Marines on New Britain that morning, facing an enemy whose supreme insult was to curse a man who meant America to them, meant it as much as the hot dogs he loved, and the great game he played. The Marines opened up. There was a small story in the papers saying the charge had been stopped, mentioning what the Japs had said about Babe Ruth.

The war went on. One day, a good sunny baseball day, there was a charity game in Yankee Stadium. There was to be some sort of ceremony before the game. Walter Johnson, the great old-timer, was out in the pitcher's box warming up. Suddenly, a man came out of the Yankee dugout. A murmur crept through the crowd. Everybody stood up and then, as if from the bowels of the stadium there came a crashing, swelling roar that the sight of only one man could create.

It was the Babe. He had the big bat over his shoulder, a big floppy smile on a face that the years hadn't changed much. He stopped and waved at the stands. He was 48 years old, but with the sound of the crowd in his ears, he must have felt ageless that day.

The Babe took his position in the box. He stood the same way, feet close together, well back of the plate, the big club moving nervously on the broad, sloping shoulders. Walter Johnson grinned at him. Ruth grinned back, then his face changed to the old, earnest scowl and he pointed his bat at the right-field bleachers.

Nobody believed he could still do it. It was a great gesture, though. Nobody believed him but the old players who were there that day, the gray-headed sportswriters, the fans who had become fathers and grandfathers. Johnson wound up and threw a couple across. The Babe swung at one and missed. Nobody laughed that day.

Then Johnson sent one down the middle, hard and fast. The big club came off Ruth's shoulder. There was a ringing whack. The ball sailed into the air, high, far and beautiful. There was the long "aaah." The ball dropped into the right-field stands for a homer. The Babe trotted around the bases, jogging slowly. The smile on his face was fine to see.

That was the Babe's last home run. For many, the 10- and 12-year-old kids in the stands that day, it was the only home run they had ever seen Babe Ruth hit. But it was as good as any that magical, magnificent

figure ever hit. It was a solid smash, like all Ruthian homers. It seemed to have the power of the years stored up in it.

And that is the way this story about George Herman Ruth should end. On a home run. Everything that came after was anti-climax—even the Babe's courageous, uncomplaining fight against the cancer that struck him in the early Forties, reduced the bellow of his voice to a hoarse whisper, and finally took his life on August 16, 1948.

The thousands who trooped gravely past the coffin in *The House That Ruth Built* knew that hitting a homer is the best thing you can do in a ball game, whether it is on a ratty, little sandlot or in Yankee Stadium. And it was the kid from the streets of Baltimore who had made the home run the wonderful thing that it is to baseball.

Babe Ruth played his game, baseball, in an era of gigantic names, in the time of Jack Dempsey, Bobby Jones, Bill Tilden. But the Babe's records are still intact. He was the most colorful, exciting, sincere, and lovable figure of his time, both as a man and as an athlete. He brought to the game the best that he had. If any one man deserves the credit, Babe Ruth must go down in history as the player who made baseball the top American sport.

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